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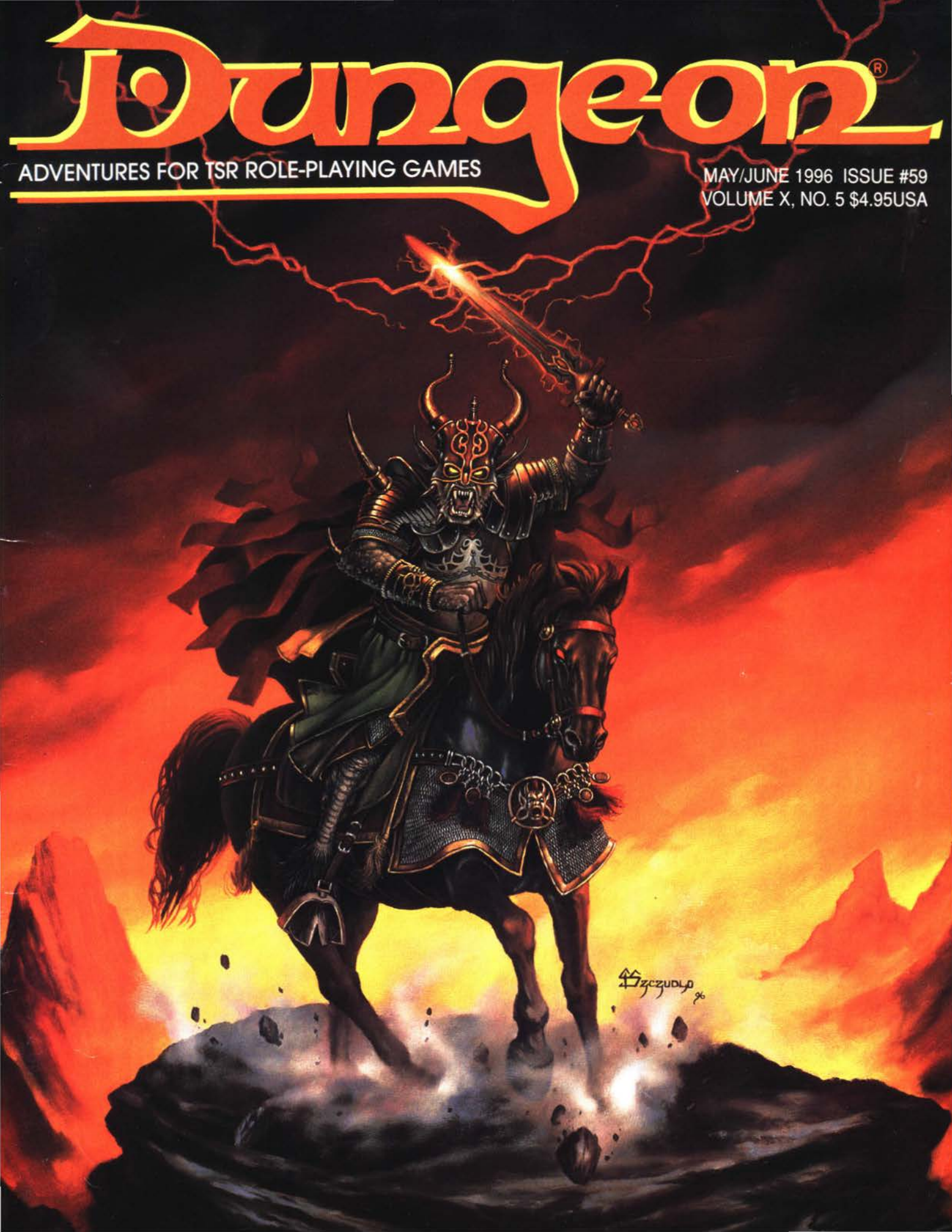

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ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

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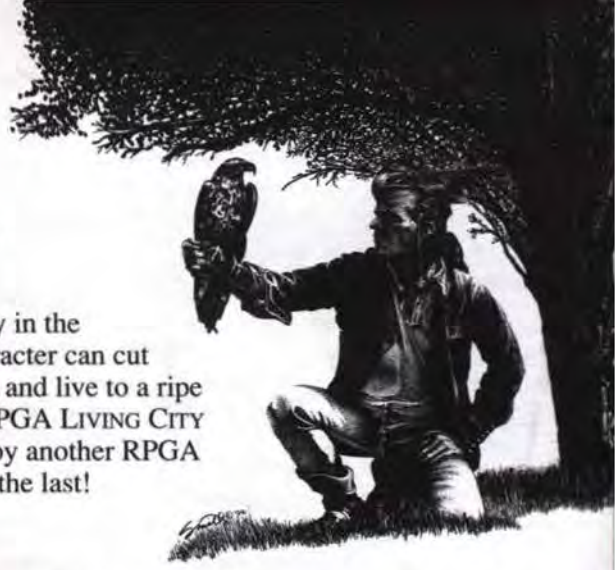

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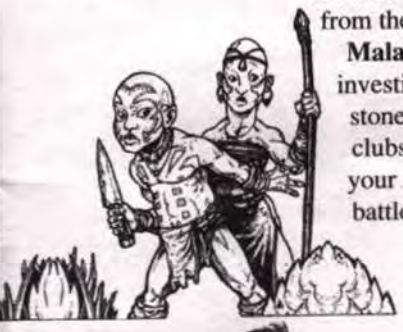

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Letters

Tell us what you think of this issue by writing to "Letters," DUNGEON® Adventures, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. You can also write to tsr.mags@genie.com. If you'd like us to print your address, you must state so in your letter.

John's Top Ten

After my letter appeared in issue #57 naming David Howery's "The Leopard Men" as one of the ten best ever to appear in the pages of *DUNGEON Adventures,* someone asked me what the others were. I could name some of them, but it took a glance through my (complete) collection of *DUNGEON Adventures* to fill out the list. So, here they are, in chronological order:

"Grakhirt's Lair" (#1) by John Nephew
"Caermor" (#3), by Nigel Findley
"The Threshold of Evil" (#10) by Scott Bennie
"Wards of Witching Ways" (#11) by Chris "Zarathustra" Perkins
"The Ship of Night" (#20) by Wolf Baur
"The Leopard Men" (#22) by David Howery
"A Hitch in Time" (#24) by Willie Walsh
"The School of Nekros" (#27) by Lisa Smedman
"The Sea of Sorrow" (#36) by Steve Kurtz
"The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb" (#37) by Mike Shel

All of these contain either really cool villains (especially wizards!) and/or imaginative settings, plus have that intangible *je ne sais quoi* that makes my mind go "click" when I read it. Of the ten, the one I DMed the most was "Wards." Great castle, great villains, great props. By the way, notice that the most recent of the ten was published in 1992? Those of us who contribute to the magazine should take note of this. Pull out all the stops; make your adventure something that will amaze and delight the reader, and remember that quantity is no substitute for quality.

John Baichtal
Via e-mail

Setting Schmetting

I enjoy *DUNGEON Adventures.* From "Umbra" to "Caveat Emptor," each issue has been a good read. As DM of my own campaign world, however, I care little about what commercial setting the modules exhibit. I prefer to cannibalize the adventures for ideas and characters. *DUNGEON Adventures* is—for me—primarily a source of ideas and vignettes to insert in my own stories.

Though I have not yet used any of the module's complete story-lines, I also like the well-crafted stories that crop up in your pages. "Maury Miller" and "Caveat Emptor" were excellent. The fantasy really came alive. I appreciate sharing in others' fantasy milieus and hope to make a contribution myself. What is role-playing but a shared fantasy?

Oh! What about that traps page? I think it's a great idea. One of my DM weaknesses is a limited number of traps.

Aaron Parr
afparr@ucdavis.edu

High Level Adventures

Hi. I'm a Subscriber to DUNGEON Adventures from Cincinnati Ohio. I was writing for two reasons: to tell you you're doing an excellent job and to make a suggestion. I've been playing the AD&D® game for about eight years and still loving it, but over time your characters will get bigger and stronger. One thing I've noticed as a player and a DM is that your magazine is kind of based around characters of low levels or a combined total of around 20.

Normally when I am the DM (and I don't play that often), I try to play big games to get the characters more advanced for the next time we play. Your adventures are great, but I would like to see a couple more challenging one's if possible. I know you go on what people write in to you, but some more spice and challenging long adventures would be nice.

Brian Romine
Via e-mail

Continued on page 68

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Distribution: DUNGEON is available from game and hobby shops throughout the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, and through a limited number of other overseas outlets. Distribution to the book trade in the United States is by Random House, Inc., and in Canada by Random House of Canada, Ltd. Distributed to the book trade in the United Kingdom is by TSR Ltd. Send orders to: Random House, Inc., Order Entry Department, Westminster MD 21157, U.S.A.; telephone (800) 733-3000.

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Editorial

Spring Cleaning

Just a few weeks ago, we read cold-winter anecdotes from northern Wisconsin. A man blew soap bubbles that froze and shattered on the ground. Another fellow used a banana left in his car as a hammer. It was a *cold* winter.

Now the snow shrinks back to reveal salt-blanched roads, and the ice sculptures from Saturday's competition looked by Sunday like waxworks victims of a mad Vincent Price. The local fire department was busy rescuing hapless tourists, their fishing shacks tilting sadly on the melting ice of the lake. Spring in Lake Geneva, and that means spring cleaning.

For us, spring cleaning means clearing our desks of correspondence, reorganizing our production, and emptying the "incoming" credenza, a long cabinet bearing four putty-colored trays. We rarely see four empty trays on the credenza. Oh, we clear the "proposals" tray regularly, and the "SideTreks" tray never stays full long. The one we spend the most time on is the "revisions and requested" tray, since that's where we know we'll find the adventures we'll eventually publish. But the most bothersome tray, the tray that demands most of the spring cleaning, the tray that troubles our sleep—that one is labeled "unsolicited manuscripts."

We'll always read a SideTrek, a proposal, or a requested manuscript before an unsolicited one. Until we completely clear out the other three trays, we don't even start on the unsolicited manuscripts. By that time, we're usually deep into production of the magazines again. Unsolicited submissions can wait a long, long time before review. And then we rarely find one that we accept. (Last year we set a record by accepting *two* for publication.) The hardest part of this year's spring cleaning has been clearing the dreaded unsolicited manuscripts tray. So...

Effectively immediately, we will no longer read unsolicited manuscripts. Do continue sending proposals, SideTreks, and Traps (along with a Standard Disclosure Form, which you can receive by requesting our writers guidelines with a 9½" self-addressed, envelope with about 50¢ postage). Unsolicited manuscripts that arrive with SASEs will be returned, the others discarded. Proposals that interest us will receive a request for the complete manuscript.

On to some other spring cleaning business.

Playtesters

We'll keep sending playtest material to those who send us a SASE large enough for a photocopy of the modules. When sending us an envelope, make sure you choose one of those great, huge, manila envelopes. As a rule of thumb, pick one that is bigger than a copy of the magazine. We'll send writers guidelines to those who include small envelopes. See our Playtester Thanks box later in this issue for details.

Generic Adventures

Many of the recent letters have expressed a preference for more or fewer (or *no* or *all*) "exotic" adventures. Based on those letters and the results of last year's poll, we'll continue to provide adventures for exotic settings but limit them to one per issue. The rest of the settings will be "generic," set in the broader medieval fantasy milieu. Some TSR settings fall into this category, including the GREYHAWK®, FORGOTTEN REALMS®, and MYSTARA® settings. Those who prefer adventures in these worlds can spot them easily by the logos on the first page of the adventure.

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Volume X
Number 5

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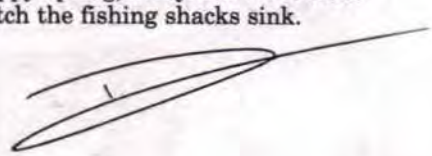
Traps

Yes, we are accepting traps submissions, so please keep them coming. We're holding out for a great one with which to launch the feature.

Happy spring, everyone. We're off to watch the fishing shacks sink.



BIRTHRIGHT™ Adventure

SEEKING BLOODSILVER

BY CHRISTOPHER PERKINS

Into the shadows

Artwork by John Dollar

Chris writes: "I hope this adventure does for the BIRTHRIGHT™ campaign what "Umbra" (Issue #55) did for the PLANESCAPE™ setting. If this adventure encourages even one gamer to run a BIRTHRIGHT campaign, I'll have done what I set out to do. For those who prefer their AD&D® games straight up, this module also fits quite nicely into non-Cerilian campaigns.

"Seeking Bloodsilver" is an AD&D adventure designed for the BIRTHRIGHT campaign setting. The module is for 4–7 PCs of levels 2–4 (about 15 total levels). To run the scenario, the DM needs the BIRTHRIGHT boxed set and the AD&D *MONSTROUS MANUAL*™ tome. The *Blood Enemies* sourcebook is useful but not required. For tips on converting the module to standard AD&D campaigns, see the "Adapting the Adventure" sidebar.

Before beginning play, the DM should be well-acquainted with all terms indigenous to the BIRTHRIGHT campaign—particularly *regent, scion, bloodline, bloodtheft, tighmaevril,* and *awnsheghlien.* Although PCs may be rulers of various Anuirean domains, the actual adventure takes place in northern Mhoried and the Stonecrown Mountains. With a few minor adjustments, the DM can relocate the adventure to another mountain range closer to the center of action. The realms of Baruk-Azhik, Avanil, and Tuornen are suitable as alternate Anuirean locales, or the DM can choose a domain elsewhere on the continent of Cerilia.

The party should include one good-aligned PC who is the regent of a domain. The other PCs may be scions, unblooded individuals, regent advisors to the main PC regent, regents of holdings, or trusted lieutenants. At least one PC or henchman should be a priest or paladin with the ability to heal wounds and turn undead.

Adventure Background

Over 60 generations ago, the champions of good and the minions of evil fought a fierce battle at Mount Deismaar. The conflict was so great that the gods themselves became involved. They faced off in the skies and in the heavens, destroying themselves and blasting Mount Deismaar to rubble. Thousands perished in the resulting devastation. Hundreds, however, survived. The few

survivors staggered from the battlefield, unknowingly imbued with the essence of the slain deities. These soldiers passed the *bloodlines* onto generations of descendants, each possessing a fraction of the gods' powers. These inheritors of the "divine essence" are known as *scions*. Some are destined to rule kingdoms, while others use their abilities to seize power by less traditional methods. Scions who become rulers are called *regents*.

Bloodlines and Bloodtheft

Not all bloodlines flourished after the battle of Mount Deismaar. Shortly after the destruction of the gods, it was learned that by slaying a scion, another scion could "snatch" the divine essence from his fallen foe, augment his own power, and strengthen his bloodline. Many families have risen to prominence in Cerilia by destroying scions of weaker bloodlines and usurping their power. By the same token, many bloodlines have vanished from Cerilia forever. The act of usurpation, or *bloodtheft*, can occur whenever two scions meet in battle; if a scion kills another blooded individual with a piercing blow to the heart, the slayer's bloodline strength increases.

The rarest kind of bloodtheft occurs when a scion is slain by a weapon made of tighmaevril (tie-MEE-vril), or *bloodsilver*. This alloy is extremely rare, and thankfully so, for any scion who owns a tighmaevril weapon holds the fate of other scions in his hands. Tighmaevril was created by an elven smith over 2,000 years ago. In his lifetime, the smith crafted only 12 weapons from this rare, gleaming metal. A scion using a tighmaevril weapon to slay another scion steals the victim's bloodline strength and severs the victim's tie to his domain (assuming the victim is a regent). Over the years, the handful of bloodsilver weapons thought to exist have been spirited away.

Even without the presence of bloodsilver weapons, attempts by scions to destroy one another resulted in countless feuds and wars, many of which lasted centuries. Betrayals, duels, and acts of bloodtheft persist to this day. Bloodtheft is, in fact, a driving force of scions who inherited the "divine essence" of Azrai, the god of evil. Feared and despised by the descendants of the other gods, these "tainted" scions became known as the *awnsheghlien* (awn-SHAY-len), an elven term meaning "blood of darkness." These horrible remnants of humanity are physically and mentally twisted by the dark essence of Azrai, living like beasts on the fringes of society—lashing out at the weak, destroying the foolish, and conquering the vulnerable.

The Gorgon

Of all the awnsheghlien, the most powerful and feared is the Gorgon. In the past 2,000 years, he has become Cerilia's greatest collector of bloodsilver weaponry. He holds the largest collection of tighmaevril weapons thought to exist: four at last count, possibly more.

Not surprisingly, the Gorgon has spies throughout Cerilia. Through the eyes of these agents, the Gorgon watches his enemies closely. Regents or scions who become a threat to his power are drawn to his lair in the Gorgon's Crown and destroyed. Moreover, the Gorgon's appetite for bloodsilver is insatiable, so his agents keep their eyes and ears open for anything having to do with tighmaevril. The mere mention of the word is said to blare in the Gorgon's ear like a sounding horn, and anyone who embarks on a quest for bloodsilver is bound to encounter the awnshegh's vicious agents.

The Shadow World

A scion named Eldred Gelien believes he knows where a tighmaevril weapon is hidden. This young upstart has spent the last month talking with a halfling "friend" about a dark and mysterious place known as the Shadow World. The halflings of Cerilia once resided in this demi-planar realm—a world that mirrored Cerilia until it was poisoned by the same "shapeless evil" that drove the halflings from their homeland.

Although the physical similarities between the two realms are unmistakable, the Shadow World's features have become dim and twisted. Halflings can peer back into the world they fled if they concentrate hard enough, and they are sensitive to areas where the membrane between the realms is thin enough to walk through.

Recently, Eldred's halfling friend Kylo discovered a portal to the Shadow World, within the ruins of Highwall—a fallen bastion located in the Stonecrown Mountains on the border separating the realm of Mhoried from the kingdom of Cariele, a short march from the western border of Markazor (domain of goblin queen Razzik Fanggrabber). Peering bravely through the portal, Kylo discovered that the fortress, though ruined in Cerilia, was perfectly intact in the Shadow World. Like its Cerilian counterpart, the fortress was built in a deep and treacherous mountain pass known to Anuireans as Mhelliviene ("Gates of Doom") and to elves as Toriendor Cuachlimyr ("Fools' Passage"). Kylo's exploration of the alternate fortress was halted suddenly by the approach of ancient skeletal horrors—the undead remains of slain Anuirean soldiers. Only a nimble leap through the portal saved the halfling from a grisly death.

Adapting the Adventure

With changes, "Seeking Bloodsilver" fits nicely into any standard AD&D campaign. DMs unfamiliar with the BIRTHRIGHT setting should ignore references to blood abilities, bloodtheft, and the bloodline-stealing properties of tighmaevril. In a non-Cerilian setting, "bloodsilver" may simply be a rare or magical metal from which the finest weapons are forged, or it may have special properties like those described in the BIRTHRIGHT rulebook (page 31). Before running the module, the DM must flesh out the qualities or properties that make bloodsilver desirable.

In BIRTHRIGHT adventures, PCs are often accompanied by dedicated retinues of loyal henchmen. If the PCs complete the module alone, the DM may wish to raise the character levels from 2–4 to 4–6 (about 30 total levels).

The political landscape of Anuire may be ignored or incorporated into the DM's own campaign world. DMs wishing to preserve some of the political background may need to change domain names and rulers to suit their own campaign worlds. The Gorgon may be replaced by an evil arch-duke or a powerful warlord. PCs without domains of their own could be hired by a benevolent lord—perhaps a slightly wiser, less adventurous Eldred Gelien or someone else in need of their services—to retrieve the bloodsilver weapon from the ruined fortress. The Shadow World could exist in any campaign as an alternate dimension or pocket plane. "The Domain Turn" sidebar may be ignored completely.

Exploring the Shadow World didn't interest Eldred until he remembered an old legend about Highwall. A thousand years ago, elven raiders, the *Sidhelien* (SHEE-lin), struck hard into Anuirean territory, in what is now Mhoried. The humans chased the Sidhelien back into the mountains, whereupon the elves ambushed and killed an entire army of Anuirean soldiers. Several hundred years after the massacre, an Anuirean architect named Duar Tairien designed a fortress—a great wall joining two mountainsides—to discourage passage through Mhelliviene. However, the Cerilian fortress was abandoned centuries ago, after the guards began encountering spectral apparitions in its halls. The garrison didn't realize that Highwall stood close to the Shadow World. As a result, the guards endured many sleepless nights. When they finally left, they claimed the fortress was haunted by the spirits of those slain in the elven massacre. Anuirean leaders admitted that the fortress had lost its strategic importance, pointing to the treaty with the elves.

The fortress was shunned until, 400 years later, it served as a refuge for a renegade clan of dwarves driven from Thak Mor Kadan by the Gorgon's goblin hordes. The goblins were convinced that the dwarves had a tighmaevril spear in their custody, one that they presumably stashed in Highwall's vault to keep it from falling into the Gorgon's wicked clutches. The Gorgon's armies occupied what is now Torien's Watch (Mhoried's northern province) and laid siege to the fortress for many months before the goblin hordes and other monsters brought down its great wall and plundered the vault.

The tighmaevril weapon was never found. The Gorgon withdrew his army, deciding that the rumor of tighmaevril had been false. (Those advisors who had assured the Gorgon that the weapon was locked in the fortress died horribly.) But now, Eldred and Kylo believe that the weapon was never found only because the Gorgon had attacked the wrong fortress. They reasoned that the fabled weapon was probably taken from Cerilia into the Shadow World and hidden there—in an identical mountain fortress—beyond the reaches of the Gorgon's evil hordes. If their theory is correct, then the weapon must remain there today.

Seeking Bloodsilver

Eldred plans to visit the ruins of Highwall. Kylo knows of a passage to the Shadow World within the fortress' ruins, and he plans to lead Eldred there. Then they must wait until nightfall, when the membrane between worlds is thin enough for non-halflings to pass through.

To help him reach his destination alive, Eldred wants adventurers to accompany him. He has decided to tell another young scion or regent (one of the PCs) about his "discovery," so they may split any treasure between them. Eldred tires of the poor adventurer's life; he wants a holding or regency to call his own, and he believes the PCs can help him. In exchange for helping them retrieve the tighmaevril weapon, Eldred expects a captaincy, law holding regency, or something of similar importance. At the very least, Eldred wants to keep the bloodsilver weapon out of the Gorgon's clutches (and the hands of other evil scions and regents). Non-regent PCs have little to offer Eldred, but he will help them anyway, if only to oppose the Gorgon. Eldred's enmity for the Gorgon stems from an incident involving one of his ancestors. (See "Meeting Eldred and Kylo" below).

Unfortunately, Eldred is not aware that his "good friend" Kylo is something of an entrepreneur. The halfling has always been offended by the fact that he is unblooded. Kylo believes he can obtain the bloodsilver weapon (with Eldred's help), ransom it off to the highest bidder, and buy himself a kingdom, unaware that the Gorgon isn't likely to play by his rules.

Unknown to both Eldred and Kylo, agents of the Gorgon have already learned about the shadow-fortress and have informed their master of the discovery. (See "For the Dungeon Master" below.) The Gorgon has sent two half-ogre henchman, Skorn and Murkblade, into Mhelliviene to locate the tighmaevril. The half-ogre brothers have a special blood ability that enables them to sniff out tighmaevril, making them well-suited for the task. The Gorgon treats the half-ogres like prized pets; their lack of ambition makes them unquestioningly loyal, and their brutality has won a special place in the Gorgon's black heart. However, should they fail in their task, their fate is sealed. The Gorgon does not reward failure.

For the Dungeon Master

The adventure revolves around the party's quest for an unidentified tighmaevril weapon. Joining the PCs is the ambitious scion from Mhoried, Eldred Gelien, and his equally ambitious halfling friend, Kylo. Kylo knows the quickest (and presumably safest) route to Highwall, located in the Stonecrown Mountains. However, there are many obstacles standing in the way of success, beginning with the tighmaevril weapon itself.

Unknown to Eldred and the Gorgon, the weapon locked in Highwall's vault is not made of tighmaevril. Genuine tighmaevril is *extremely* rare. Also unknown to the pair is that *Brichlur* (a magical *spear +3*) was smuggled into Highwall by the dwarven renegades to divert the attentions of the Gorgon. The maneuver paid off well. At about the same time the Gorgon's army was laying siege to the remote mountain fortress, several hundred dwarves successfully fled Mur-Kilad, heading toward safer realms beyond the Gorgon's reach. In effect, the renegades at Highwall gave their own lives to help hundreds of dwarves escape the Gorgon's tyranny.

Eldred's family poses another problem. The young scion's excursion has piqued the interest of his uncle, Regien. As first advisor to the Mhor, Regien is a powerful figure in Mhoried. A wizard of some ability, Regien controls most of the realm's magical sources, including a source in the province of Torien's Watch. Regien monitors Eldred's activities carefully, ensuring that the young lad's "adventuring" does not trigger a scandal or drag Mhoried into war. At a recent family gathering, Regien used an *ESP* spell to read his nephew's mind, thus learning of Eldred's quest. Regien has since turned to his daughter, Taerlyn, for assistance. Taerlyn has more adventuring experience than Eldred, and she knows a fair deal about the Stonecrowns. Taerlyn has made arrangements to explore the fortress of Highwall and retrieve the tighmaevril weapon for her father. (Regien believes he is better equipped to keep the weapon out of the Gorgon's hands.) Eldred and the PCs encounter Taerlyn and her henchmen at the ruins.

Although she is a skilled warrior, Taerlyn does not choose her colleagues wisely. One of her "loyal" henchmen, a

The Domain Turn

One of the features that distinguishes the BIRTHRIGHT campaign from other AD&D settings is the *domain turn*. A single domain turn lasts three months, during which time regents direct the growth of their domains by doing what's expected of them: setting taxes, building armies and fortresses, engaging in diplomatic ventures, waging war, dealing with family matters, and maintaining various holdings. Regents who partake in an adventure must expend a minimum of one action round (the equivalent of roughly one month) doing so. Barring any unforeseen plot deviations, "Seeking Bloodsilver" takes place during a single action round.

Domain turns provide a backdrop for the campaign and give the PCs other concerns besides slaying monsters and plundering ruins. Assuming the PC regents survive and avoid capture, the DM may flesh out the remainder of the domain turn using the "Domain Sequence of Play" section below. The regent's actions may have effects and consequences back home in the regent's own domain; some of the more plausible repercussions of the adventure are outlined in "Concluding the Adventure."

Keeping Track of Time

Time is a crucial element in any BIRTHRIGHT campaign. If the adventure takes more than one month (including travel time), the PC expends *one action round* for each month of absence. The DM may want to track time using the Anuirean calendar on the map sheet in the BIRTHRIGHT boxed set. The DM can record the day the PCs embark on their quest and the day they return (and any other events of consequence).

Domain Sequence of Play

The following section shows how the adventure can be worked into a typical domain turn. The DM should refer to the BIRTHRIGHT *Rulebook*, pages 39–48, for a detailed description of the domain turn sequence.

1. Roll Random Events. Instead of rolling for a random event that could sideline the PC regent, the DM should use this part of the domain turn to introduce Eldred and Kylo. See the "Meeting Eldred and Kylo" section for details.

2. Determine Domain Initiative. Anuirean politics are a dangerous game. Nevertheless, the DM should try to ease political tensions with neighboring regents and kingdoms several domain turns prior to this adventure, lest the PC regent decline to participate in the adventure. Unless the DM wishes to introduce a rival domain as an added threat, assume that all neighboring kingdoms are inactive for the turn (building armies and so forth). In this case, assuming there is only one PC regent, the DM may forego the initiative roll.

Introducing an added threat is not recommended unless the average PC level is 4 or higher. If the DM plans to use this adventure as a springboard for further political intrigue, he must select a domain as the Enemy. The Enemy must have at least one spy in the PC regent's court. The enemy becomes involved when the spy overhears a conversation between Eldred and the PCs concerning rumors of tighmaevril in Highwall. In this case, the Enemy is considered active, and domain initiative should be rolled normally.

3. Collect Regency Points. The PC regent calculates his current Regency Point score. See page 40 in the rulebook.

4. Taxation, Collection, and Trade. The PC regent declares taxation (light, moderate, or severe), then rolls to determine how many GBs are collected per province, holding, and trade route, as well as how many GBs are lost due to claims by law holdings. See pages 41–44 in the rulebook.

5. Pay Domain Maintenance. Maintenance, payroll, and court costs—and the penalties for failing to meet them—are detailed on pages 44–46 of the rulebook.

6. Declare Free Actions. Discussing plans with Eldred and Kylo, digging up information on these NPCs, dispatching emissaries to neighboring realms, and traveling to other provinces within the PC regent's own domain are considered free actions. The DM should note in which province the PCs meet with Eldred, since this may have some bearing on the success of the Enemy's espionage attempt (see below).

Sending an emissary to inform the Mhor of the party's "visit" is considered a free action; likewise, the PC regent may dispatch an emissary to discuss terms with the Gorgon. (Only the boldest lieutenants would dare enter the Gorgon's Crown on the PC's behalf. Anyone else would consider the trip a death sentence.) The Gorgon already knows about the tighmaevril weapon in Highwall and has no interest in entertaining an ambassador from the PC regent's domain. During the first action round (see 7 below), the Gorgon slays the emissary, then instructs some lackey to deliver the emissary's head to the PC regent's court.

If the DM has activated an Enemy who is both a regent and a thief, the Enemy takes one free espionage action this turn. The Enemy uses a spy in the PC regent's court to uncover Eldred's quest and return with the information. The success of the espionage attempt depends on the level of the PC regent's province and the number of loyal law holdings in the province. (See page 54 of the rulebook for details.)

7, 8, 9. Action Rounds. The adventure can take place in the first action round, or the PCs may postpone their departure until the second or third action round. If the PC regent participates in the adventure, the domain turn is suspended until the adventure is resolved. The Enemy (if active) uses his first action round to learn of Eldred's quest. If this was already accomplished in 6 (above), the Enemy sends an assassin to kill Eldred instead, hoping that his sudden death will dissuade the PC regent from completing the adventure. If either espionage attempt fails, the Enemy may use another espionage action to kidnap Eldred or Kylo, thus distracting the PC regent from the adventure at hand.

Vara (unblooded Anuirean thief): AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; T5; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; D 17; SA backstab (×3); ML 10; XP 650; PP 55%, OL 30%, F/RT 25%, MS 75%, HS 60%, DN 35%, CW 75%; dagger (secret compartment holds Type D poison, good for 3 successful attacks). In the guise of a guard or serving maid, Vara attempts to move close enough to Eldred to stab him with her poisoned dagger. If captured, Vara claims to work for someone other than the true Enemy, although certain spells and blood abilities may reveal the truth.

If the PC regent delays his departure to Highwall, he risks losing ground to the

Enemy. The Enemy, if active, dispatches a small retinue of 1d10+10 henchmen to retrieve the bloodsilver weapon in the final action round. This retinue may be commanded by the regent himself or a trusted lieutenant.

Page 49 of the rulebook lists several other actions a PC or Enemy regent may take during any given action round. Here are some possibilities and their likely outcomes:

Agitate/Contest: A regent (PC or Enemy) may attempt to stabilize a province's loyalty to himself or reduce the loyalty rating in one of his opponent's provinces. To affect the loyalty rating in a rival's domain requires the agitating regent to possess at least one law holding in the affected province. Contesting an opponent's holdings or provinces is a much more dangerous affair. PCs attempting this maneuver may provoke an untimely war.

Declare War: The Enemy does not declare war unless the PC regent does something blatantly aggressive, like conduct acts of espionage, cast realm spells that adversely affect the Enemy's domain, or declare war. The DM should assume that the Enemy has armies comparable or superior to those of the PC regent unless the PC has invested considerable time and money building armies. If the Enemy is much stronger (or weaker) than the PC regent, the Enemy may demand (or agree to pay) tribute to avoid war.

Diplomacy: A regent (PC or Enemy) may form a new alliance or break an existing one. If the PC regent and Enemy regent were allies at the start of the domain turn, one or the other may choose to break the alliance in response to some hostile action. The PC or Enemy regent may try to force concessions in lieu of open warfare.

10. Adjust Loyalty and Regency. The PC regent must always guard against civil revolt. See pages 47–48 of the rulebook for details.

If the PC regent dies during the adventure, his heir assumes control of the domain and inherits the PC's Regency Point score. If the regent dies before an heir is chosen, the domain becomes uncontrolled and plunges into rebellion, as petty lords and lieutenants vie for control. If the PC regent survives (or is succeeded by a rightful heir), the domain turn can begin anew.

The party's exploration of Highwall could lay the groundwork for any number of "random events" set to occur during the next several domain turns. The "Concluding the Adventure" section provides the DM with several suggestions and hooks for future adventures involving the PC regent, the realm of Mhoried, and the dreaded Gorgon.

Mur-Kiladan dwarf named Delvyn, has a talking crow who happens to be a *polymorphed* Markaz goblin named Kracklevorn. (The goblins of Markazor and the dwarves of Mur-Kilad fight under the same banner—that of the Gorgon.) Before setting out, Delvyn sent Kracklevorn back to Markazor, where the "crow" informed the Gorgon's spies of Taerlyn's quest. Kracklevorn has since returned to Delvyn, accompanying the dwarf to Highwall.

As if Taerlyn isn't trouble enough, the PCs eventually come face-to-face with the Gorgon's half-ogre henchmen, Skorn and Murkblade. The brothers have infiltrated Mhoried's borders and stop at nothing to reach Highwall's vault, eliminating *anyone* who stands between them and the bloodsilver. The two half-ogres can "smell" bloodsilver within 120 yards—a blood ability afforded to them as scions of Azrai. Once the half-ogres realize the spear is not made of bloodsilver, they abandon their quest and return to Cerilia to inform their master. (Before departing, the half-ogres try to slay Eldred, Kylo, Taerlyn and anyone else who knowingly or unwittingly spread lies about the existence of tighmaevril!)

Eldred and the PCs may keep any treasure for themselves once the half-ogres have been slain or driven away. Taerlyn will no doubt want her "share" of the treasure as well, turning against her cousin and the party if she doesn't get her way. If the PCs harm or slay Taerlyn, they will surely invite the wrath of her father and possibly the Mhor himself.

Beginning the Adventure

Unless the DM has a different preference, the adventure takes place in Mhoried. Mhoried is the home of Eldred Gelien and is not available to PCs as a starting regency. Nevertheless, it provides a good starting point for blooded and unblooded PCs who are not regents.

If the party includes a regent, the DM may wish to begin the adventure in the regent's own domain and work from there. The DM must devise a way for the PCs and Eldred to meet. Either the PCs must travel to Mhoried, or Eldred must come to them. In either event, the DM should incorporate the adventure into the regular domain turn; DMs running BIRTHRIGHT campaigns should refer to "The Domain Turn" sidebar for details.

If the PCs are to meet Eldred in Mhoried, the DM must concoct a logical reason why the PC regent would leave his domain. Perhaps the PC regent wishes to meet with the Mhor to discuss "mutual concerns" regarding the goblin-queen of Markazor or to establish a trade route between the PC's domain and the realm of Mhoried. (Either task requires the regent to use an *action round.*) More likely, the PC has a friend or acquaintance in Mhoried's court and happens to encounter young Eldred during a diplomatic visit. (DMs running established Cerilian campaigns or adapting this adventure to another AD&D game setting may replace Eldred with another NPC who is familiar to the PCs).

If Eldred takes the initiative and visits the PC regent, he simply arrives at the PC's court (with Kylo), introduces himself, and asks to discuss a matter of utmost secrecy. This encounter should take place during the regular domain turn (see "The Domain Turn" sidebar), before the three action rounds.

Meeting Èldred and Kylo

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs meet Eldred Gelien and Kylo the halfling for the first time:

> A young knight dressed in polished chain mail stands before you, flanked by two of your guards. The young man's shield is emblazoned with the symbol of a silver, two-headed dragon. With his dark looks and pale blue eyes, he seems more like an unprincipled Brecht than an Anuirean nobleman. However, he bows to you respectfully and introduces himself as Eldred Gelien of Mhoried. Standing by the young man's side is a small, cherubic halfling with auburn hair and chestnut-brown apparel.

Once he has the regent's attention, Eldred privately relates the information concerning Highwall and the blood-

silver weapon as given in "The Shadow World." The DM should paraphrase this section of the "Adventure Background" for the players as if Eldred were recounting the tale.

Eldred Gelien (blooded Anuirean fighter): AL CG; AC 4 (2 with *shield +1*); MV 12; F3; hp 20; THAC0 18 (base); #AT 1 (3/2 with broad sword); Dmg by weapon type (+2 with specialization); S 15, D 15, C 13, I 11, W 10, Ch 14; ML 13; chain mail, *shield +1* (named *Draeke;* emblazoned with his arms), broad sword (specialized), shortsword. Eldred's bloodline (major, strength: 25) derives from Reynir.

Blood abilities: *alertness* (surprised only on a 1), *blood history* (see below), *resistance* (50% resistance to *slow, entangle, hold,* and similar restraining spells).

Eldred speaks Anuirean and knows several colorful Sidhelien expressions. He is well-schooled, articulate, and unfailingly gallant. His dark, striking looks are inherited from his mother, a blooded Brecht. Eldred is not an only child; he has three arrogant step-brothers from his father's first marriage to a blooded Anuirean noblewoman. PC regents may use a free action to learn more about Eldred and his family (see "The Domain Turn" sidebar). The House of Gelien is proud and honorable. Any effort to uncover shady dealings requires a successful espionage attempt (during an action round unless the PC regent is a thief). One of Eldred's step-brothers might be involved in some sinister plot (DM's discretion); however, Eldred has no evil or duplicitous intentions.

Eldred seeks greatness. He carries with him the memories of his ancestor, Daeric Gelien, who distinguished himself in battle against the Gorgon's evil hordes. Eldred's *blood history* ability allows him to conjure up images of that battle in his own mind, wherein he can see (through Daeric's eyes) the Anuirean troops fighting the Gorgon and his vast armies. Eldred can describe the climactic confrontation between Daeric and the awnshegh atop a mountain in the Gorgon's Crown, and he tells how Daeric was impaled by the Gorgon's bloodsilver sword *Lifender* and left to die. When asked why he would stand in defiance of the Gorgon, Eldred explains that he believes his destiny is someday to avenge Daeric Gelien's death.

Eldred's family is prominent in Mhoried, but Eldred is unwilling to rest on his laurels and let "the family name" carry him throughout life. Several dozen relatives stand between him and a regency. Needless to say, Eldred has started looking for "career opportunities" beyond Mhoried's borders.

Eldred's greatest virtue is perhaps his greatest failing: he trusts too easily. For instance, he has placed a great deal of trust in the halfling Kylo, and he quickly regards PCs as confidantes. Thinking that the PC regent is good-aligned (by reputation and past deeds), Eldred intends to share his "secret" with the PCs in the hope that they will help him retrieve the tighmaevril weapon from Highwall before it falls into evil hands. Eldred believes the PCs are better suited to keep and guard the weapon, but he expects to get something for its recovery. Specifically, he wants a plum role in the PC's domain. When asked what role he intends to fill, Eldred suggests either Captain of the Guard (of a town, castle, or similar fortification) or regent of a law holding. Naturally, he intends to prove his worth over the course of the adventure.

If the PC regent refuses to see Eldred or turns down Eldred's offer, the young scion tries to explain how possession of a tighmaevril weapon can provide security against scions who would try to usurp the PC regent's power. (There is also the prestige of owning such a weapon. Countless regents would pay through the teeth to own one!) Eldred also urges the PCs to investigate Highwall before word of the bloodsilver leaks out to other regents and scions. Rival kingdoms may have spies in the PC regent's court!

Kylo the Wanderer (unblooded halfling fighter/thief): AL N (good tendencies); AC 6; MV 6; F1/T2; hp 9; THAC0 19 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA +1 to hit with slings and thrown missile weapons, surprise; SD *detect evil, detect undead,* and *detect magic* (necromancy only) with 75% chance of success; *dimension door* or *shadow walk* (usable thrice/week, chance of success varies); S 14, D 17, C 15, I 10, W 12, Ch 11; ML 10; PP 40%, OL 35%, F/RT 30%, MS 45%, HS 40%, DN 30%, CW 65%, RL 5%; *cloak of protection +1,* shortsword, sling with 12 bullets.

PCs who cast an *ESP* spell on Kylo or use the blood ability *character reading* discover that Kylo is more interested in securing the tighmaevril weapon for himself than in helping Eldred or the party. (See "Seeking Bloodsilver" in the "Adventure Background" for details.) If he cannot acquire a tighmaevril weapon, Kylo settles for treasure—anything to secure his future and make his life easier. He is especially fond of rings and gems.

Before setting out for Highwall, Kylo recommends that PC clerics stock up on vials of holy water. Although he grossly understates the matter, Kylo informs the party that undead are known to lurk within the Shadow World. He encountered several animated skeletons the last time he set foot in the fortress.

Crossing Mhoried

Eldred and Kylo know the most direct route to Highwall. Whether the PCs choose to inform the Mhor of their journey is their decision (as a matter of courtesy). The PC regent may send a messenger to notify the Mhor without using an action round. Eldred recommends that the PCs act discreetly. He does not want anyone to learn the true purpose of their quest, lest they encounter other scions eager to secure the fabled bloodsilver weapon. The Mhor doesn't care if a small band of adventurers enters his borders. A regent who enters Mhoried with dozens of armed soldiers, however, is cause for concern.

Information on Mhoried is given on pages 33, 38, and 39 in the BIRTHRIGHT *Ruins of Empire* booklet. The PCs can learn several things about Mhoried from their advisors (if the PCs are regents) or Eldred:

❖ The Mhor, Daeric Mhoried, guarantees every Mhorien fair and equitable treatment. The citizens of Mhoried are tough and hardy, and the Mhor is well-respected and admired by most of them.

❖ The bulk of Mhoried's army is stationed in the northeastern provinces, warding against invasions from Markazor and the Gorgon. The Mhoriens are also wary of their southern neighbor, Ghoere.

❖ The Mhor's advisor, Regien, controls most of the magic of Mhoried, protecting the land against rival sorcery. Regien is Eldred's uncle, although their relationship is best described as distant and dispassionate.

❖ Most of Mhoried's laws boil down to one essential rule: do what you please, so long as you hurt no one else.

New Blood Abilities

Blood Sense (Minor, Major)

As a minor ability, the scion can sense the presence of blooded individuals within a radius of 60' + 10' per level (or Hit Dice). The scion can also deduce the bloodline strength category (tainted, minor, major, or great) of any blooded individual within range. As a major ability, the scion can determine the relative bloodline strength scores of individuals in the same category. For example, if two individuals with tainted bloodlines are detected, the scion can accurately deduce which of the two has the higher bloodline score.

Derivations: Reynir, Brenna, Vorynn, Azrai

Locate Bloodsilver (Minor)

This ability allows the scion to sense bloodsilver (tighmaevril) within a radius of 50 yards + 10 yards per level (or Hit Dice). Thus, a 7th-level scion can sense the presence of tighmaevril within 120 yards. The scion can follow the "smell" to its source in much the same way a *potion of treasure finding* guides one to treasure. The scent of tighmaevril is detectable only by scions with this blood ability. The aroma is similar to that of cinnamon, yet most of the scions with this ability find the smell unappealing. An *obscure object* spell (reverse of *locate object*) prevents this blood ability from functioning; the scion does not detect tighmaevril even if the metal is within sensory range.

Derivations: Azrai

Through Torien's Watch

Torien's Watch is Mhoried's northernmost province. It is heavily wooded and sparsely populated. The Guardians of Mhoried (trained Mhorien soldiers) watch vigilantly for goblin and dwarven raiders from neighboring Markazor, as well as orog intruders from the Five Peaks. Foot patrols are common throughout Torien's Watch, and they tend to be larger and more heavily armed than their southern counterparts.

The northern border of Torien's Watch is formed by the Stonecrowns—a wall of mountains that separates Mhoried from the kingdom of Cariele. To reach the Carielean capital of Caerlinien, one must navigate Mhelliviene, a deep mountain pass. The ruins of Highwall are located in this gorge (see map).

The party's arrival at Highwall is preceded by two encounters. "Act of Bloodtheft" takes place in the woods south of Highwall. "The Wyvern Strikes" occurs in the foothills of the Stonecrowns, shortly after the party emerges from the woods. These encounters occur regardless of the size of the party's entourage.

Act of Bloodtheft

As the PCs make their way through the woods of Torien's Watch, they are beset by a small band of brigands. The brigands have disguised themselves as trees using magical elixirs taken from a druid's hovel. (The druid lived in the western woods of Torien's Watch, until the brigands attacked and killed her three days ago.) The elixirs' effect is similar to the druid's *tree* spell, although imbibers can shift back and forth between forms until the elixir wears off in 1d4 turns.

There are 11 brigands altogether. The brigand leader, Aderack Arlekkas, is a Rjurik exile wanted for brigandry in the northern kingdom of Dhoesone. (The price on his head amounts to 500 gp.) As Eldred and the PCs approach the *polymorphed* brigands, Aderack reverts to human form and confronts them alone. Read or paraphrase the following:

> One of the trees up ahead suddenly shivers, as if shaken by a strong wind. Before your eyes, the great tree alters shape until it transforms into a tall, armored man. The figure has long blonde hair swept back from the forehead, and his face is heavily scarred. His eyes, like two black coals, watch you with something other than good intentions.

Aderack is bold and haughty, proclaiming himself "slayer of scions." (He did kill a scion or two in Dhoesone, which explains his higher bloodline strength score and the equally high bounty on his head.) Aderack is a brutal, intimidating warrior. His *blood sense* ability (see "New Blood Abilities" sidebar) enables him to determine which PCs and NPCs have tainted, minor, major, and great bloodlines. Once he detects the presence of blooded individuals, he tries to improve his own bloodline strength by challenging the PC or NPC with the highest bloodline strength to an "honorable" fight to the death.

If the party accepts Aderack's challenge, Aderack chooses the opponent he wishes to fight. If Aderack challenges a PC regent, the regent is expected to fight his own battle, not to appoint a champion. If Aderack's challenge is directed at Eldred, the young Mhorien knight accepts and fights to the best of his ability.

The rules for bloodtheft are given on page 31 of the BIRTHRIGHT *Rulebook*. To increase his bloodline strength, Aderack must slay his blooded opponent with a piercing blow to the heart. This blow must be a called shot (–4 to hit), and damage must be sufficient to reduce his opponent to 0 hp. A scion reduced to 0 hp this way is dead and cannot be healed magically or otherwise. (If the DM uses the critical hit tables in the *PLAYER'S OPTION™: Combat & Tactics* rules, called shots are unnecessary.)

If the PCs attack Aderack, the other 10 brigands revert to their human forms and discharge their crossbows. After one round of watching the party, the brigands can assess which PCs and NPCs are most threatening and target them specifically. Their initial crossbow bolts are coated with Type C poison (save at +1). After discharging their bolts, the brigands attack with their long swords or flee into the woods (assuming the form of trees once they are out of the party's sight).

If Aderack wins the challenge and succeeds in usurping a portion of his opponent's bloodline strength, he wipes his short sword clean on the victim's corpse and either lets the party continue on its way or heads off into the woods. (If he is attacked, the brigands retaliate in kind.) If Aderack slays his foe without piercing him through the heart, he usurps none of the victim's bloodline strength. Infuriated by his own failure, he challenges another PC to battle. If the PC refuses, the enraged Aderack orders his brigands to attack.

If no PC or NPC accepts Aderack's initial challenge, Aderack makes some snide comment about their cowardice and demands 500 gp of treasure as compensation for the "insult." If the PCs refuse, he warns them that failure to comply may lead to bloodshed. (If the PCs persist in making things difficult, Aderack orders the brigands to open

fire.) If the party has no treasure or jewelry, Aderack accepts horses and well-crafted weapons (enough for his entire band).

Clever PCs can persuade Aderack and the other brigands to join them in their quest. The mention of tighmaevril sparks Aderack's interest, and the opportunity to plunder Highwall's vault appeals to him. However, Aderack and his men cannot be trusted. They may turn against the party if they receive less than their "fair share."

Aderack Arlekkas (blooded Rjuven fighter): AL NE; AC 3 (4 without shield); MV 12; F4; hp 39; THAC0 17 (base); #AT 1 (3/2 with long sword); Dmg by weapon type +3 (strength), +2 (specialization); S 18/62 (+2/+3), D 15, C 16, I 11, W 9, Ch 12; ML 15; XP 420; chain mail, shield, long sword (specialized), short sword, dagger (strapped to boot). Like Eldred, Aderack's bloodline (tainted, strength: 22) derives from Reynir.

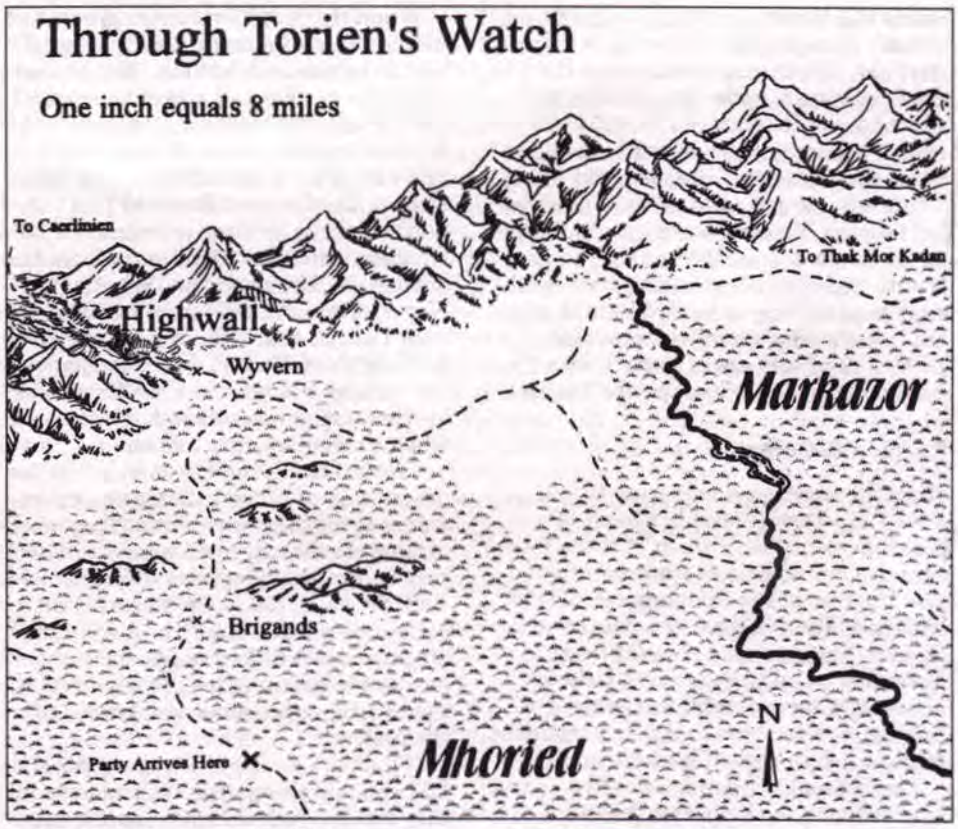
Blood abilities: *blood sense* (minor; see "New Blood Abilities" sidebar), *iron will* (+2 to saves vs. mind-controlling magic).

Brigands (10 unblooded Anuirean fighters): AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; F1; hp 8 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA poisoned bolts (see above); ML 10; XP 35; piecemeal armor (AC 7), light crossbow (2d6 bolts apiece), long sword, dagger.

The Wyvern Strikes

Like dragons, wyverns are rare in Anuire. However, the Stonecrowns have recently become the hunting ground of a rogue wyvern named Vrachspir (or "Darkspike"). This predator plagued the kingdom of Kiergard for years until it was finally driven away by magic. Through the clouds, it spots the party advancing toward Mhelliviene and descends to attack. If the party makes a successful surprise roll, someone in the retinue spots the great beast as it begins its descent. The wyvern is undeterred by numbers, attacking the party regardless of how many henchmen the PCs have.

The wyvern is especially fond of horses. If the PCs dismount to confront the wyvern, it swoops down and snatches up the nearest horse (attack roll required) before heading off. PCs and NPCs who place themselves between the wyvern and its intended prey are attacked.



Vrachspir (wyvern): INT low; AL N(E); AC 3; MV 6, fly 24 (E); HD 7+7; hp 45 (currently 38); THAC0 13; #AT 2 (bite/stinger); Dmg 2d8/1d6; SA poison (save or die); SZ G (35′ long); ML 14; XP 1,400; *MM*/366.

If the PCs draw Vrachspir into melee range, they see two crossbow bolts embedded in the wyvern's neck—the result of a brief skirmish involving Taerlyn and her men. (See "Taerlyn & Company" for details.)

The Ruins of Highwall

Mhelliviene is a lengthy gorge carved through the mountains by erosion. The mountains that line the gorge are sheer and treacherous to climb. Anyone attempting to do so finds that the stone crumbles easily; all climbing checks are made at –15%. The ruined fortress of Highwall lies deep within this mountain gorge. Regardless of the time they reach the fortress, Eldred and the PCs encounter Taerlyn and her mercenaries as soon as they arrive. See "Taerlyn & Company" below for details.

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs arrive within sight of the ruins:

> The fortress that once joined two mountains now stands in ruins, its mighty wall sundered and reduced to a pile of rubble. The only sections of Highwall left standing are those built into the mountainsides. These fortifications remain largely intact, although the wall's collapse and years of neglect have taken their toll. In places, the stonework has crumbled away, exposing sections of the fortress interior.

To locate the tighmaevril weapon, the PCs must first enter the Shadow World. Between sunfall (7:00 P.M.) and midnight, there is an increasing 20% chance/hour of a naturally-occurring portal opening in area **1**. Between midnight and 1:00 A.M., the chance is 100%. From 1:00 A.M. to sunrise (5:00 A.M.), the chance diminishes by 20% per hour. Once opened, the portal remains until touched by the light of the sun. For details on the portal itself, refer to area **1** in the "Highwall in Shadows" section.

Halflings have no control over natural portals leading to the Shadow World. However, halflings and other individuals with the *shadow walk* ability do not need a portal to enter the Shadow World, provided they are somewhere

inside the fortress or ruins. Such individuals have a 10% of crossing in bright daylight; this chance increases as the daylight wanes, up to 80% at midnight. All chances are improved by +20%, however, if the individuals stand in area **1** when the "crossover" is attempted. Those who cannot *shadow walk* must be led into the Shadow World by a halfling (or other *shadow walker*) or wait in area **1** until nightfall. The *shadow walk* spell enables a halfling or wizard to take others into the Shadow World, provided these individuals are in contact with the halfling or wizard when the spell is cast.

Taerlyn & Company

Huddled around a smoldering fire in area **1** are Taerlyn and her band of hired mercenaries. Fifteen of these mercenaries are unshaven Anuirean fighters. The rest of the company consists of Ruornad (Taerlyn's trusted lieutenant), Shaene Nagor (a magician-for-hire), Parniel (a halfling thief), and Delvyn (a one-eyed dwarven fighter). Delvyn's talking crow is actually a *polymorphed* Markaz goblin named Kracklevorn.

Taerlyn and her band arrived at Highwall only hours before the PCs. They traveled to the fortress on foot and lost a man fighting the wyvern Vrachspir. (The man was carried away and devoured.) Another mercenary died fighting the giant scorpion in area **8**. When the PCs encounter them, Taerlyn and the other "name" NPCs are waiting for night to fall, at which point they expect to cross over into the Shadow World and explore the alternate fortress. If night has already fallen, Taerlyn and the others are either waiting for the portal to open, or they've just completed the crossover (and are encountered on the "other side"). The 15 unnamed mercenaries in Taerlyn's retinue will not enter the Shadow World. They remain in the ruins to prevent others from following Taerlyn into the alternate fortress.

Taerlyn is expecting to encounter Eldred at some point, and she has prepared her men accordingly. Most of them are hidden behind the piles of debris (see area **1** below), except for a few spotters facing east. If Eldred is with the PCs, he does not recognize Taerlyn when he sees her; she uses her *alter appearance* blood ability to appear as a bearded male warrior. This disguise, similar to the wizard's *change self* spell, lasts for 14 rounds.

When the party's retinue approaches within 50′ of the ruins, Taerlyn signals her mercenaries to attack. (She has no intention of allowing others to snatch the tighmaevril weapon, and she expects that this show of force will drive the PCs away.) Assuming a fight ensues, Taerlyn and Ruornad join the battle if three or more mercenaries fall. Kracklevorn takes flight and circles the battlefield. The magician, Shaene Nagor, remains outside the battle zone with Delvyn nearby to protect him. The halfling thief, Parniel, hides in shadows the instant Eldred and the PCs are spotted, using his backstab ability when the opportunity arises.

Taerlyn has given her men a detailed description of Eldred; under no circumstances will they harm him. (They may attempt to disarm him, however.) This respect for family applies to Eldred as well, for he would never blatantly or deliberately harm Taerlyn. If she is still disguised and Eldred is placed in the position of harming her, Taerlyn reverts to her true appearance and breaks off the melee.

If half the mercenaries are slain, the DM should roll against their morale. If they fail the roll, the mercenaries surrender and ask to join the PCs. If the entire mercenary company is defeated, Taerlyn surrenders. She also surrenders if she or Ruornad is seriously injured. (To her, "surrender" does not entail relinquishing her weapons, and she attacks anyone who attempts to remove them.) If Aderack and his brigands joined the party (see "Act of Bloodtheft"), they may turn against the PCs if the battle swings in Taerlyn's favor. Even if she is defeated, Taerlyn may attempt to buy Aderack's loyalty at some later time.

If the PCs surrender to Taerlyn's forces, Taerlyn orders them to throw down their weapons and depart Mhelliviene immediately. Kylo the halfling tries to persuade Taerlyn to let him stay. After all, who knows the Shadow World better than a halfling? If the halfling Parniel is still alive, Taerlyn has no use for Kylo's services and denies his request. If Parniel was slain in the battle, however, Taerlyn reluctantly agrees to take Kylo in his place. If two or more "name" NPCs are slain, Taerlyn may be persuaded to take others into the Shadow World to help combat the undead thought to dwell on the other side. She also accepts the services of a PC priest, provided the cleric has the ability to turn undead. If the PCs have nothing to offer and refuse to surrender, Taerlyn may be forced to use a more compelling means of persuasion.

Taerlyn (blooded Anuirean fighter): AL N; AC 2; MV 12; F4; hp 33; THAC0 17 (base); #AT 1 (3/2 with footman's flail); Dmg by weapon type (+2 with specialization); S 15, D 15, C 12, I 11, W 9 (13 with heightened ability), Ch 14; ML 13; XP 420; fluted *plate mail +1* (endows wearer with alertness; +1 bonus to surprise rolls; named "Bloodguard"), *helm of bravery* (shaped like a lion's head; +2 to save vs. fear-related magic), *footman's flail +2* (no special abilities; named *Flennys,* or "Ironwind"), short sword. Taerlyn's bloodline (major, strength: 27) derives from Vorynn. In addition to her specialized weapon (flail), Taerlyn is proficient with the spear and long sword.

Blood abilities: *alter appearance* (lasts 14 rounds, usable once/day), *heightened ability* (improves Wisdom by 4 points).

Taerlyn has no qualms about slaying rival scions who stand in her way. She strives to help her father by retrieving the fabled tighmaevril weapon supposedly contained in Highwall's vault. A young and passionate woman, Taerlyn enjoys hunting and sleeping under the stars. She respects and loves Ruornad, but he is unblooded, and thus they can never marry. (Taerlyn knows her father would not allow it.) She has already pledged to marry a young gentleman named Gaelin who lives in Bevaldruour and hails from a respected Mhorien family. She is happy with this arrangement and looks forward to starting her own family.

Taerlyn does not trust the mercenaries with her life. That responsibility is placed squarely on the broad shoulders of her lieutenant, Ruornad.

Ruornad (unblooded Anuirean fighter): AL N (good tendencies); AC 4; MV 12; F5; hp 42; THAC0 16 (base); #AT 1 (3/2 with spear); Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength), +2 (specialization); S 17 (+1/+1), D 12, C 15, I 11, W 12, Ch 13; ML 15; XP 420; *chain mail +1* (named *Haelcalus,* or "Warskin"), helm, *spear +1* (9′ long, iron-tipped shaft; named *Brichtal,* or "Longspear"), broadsword, fur-lined cloak. In addition to his weapon specialization (spear), Ruornad is proficient with the mace and all long-bladed weapons.

Ruornad's huge frame is a striking contrast to Taerlyn's slight figure, but together they make a fearsome team. Ruornad has known Taerlyn since she was a child, and the two have trained together for years. Ruornad is a fair man with a tolerant attitude. However, attacking Taerlyn is one way to arouse his temper. If the PCs rout Taerlyn's mercenaries, Ruornad advises her to surrender before further blood is spilt.

Shaene Nagor (unblooded Anuirean magician): AL N (evil tendencies); AC 9; MV 12; M5; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon or spell; D 15, I 17, W 15; ML 8; XP 420; robe, short sword, light crossbow, nine bolts.

Spells memorized: *detect magic, detect undead, magic missile* (×2), *spook; blur, detect invisibility, ESP; wraithform* (×2).

Shaene is a quiet, clean-shaven man. Beneath his contemplative brow, behind those clear blue eyes, one can almost see the wheels turning in his brain. Shaene has spent the last year researching the history of the Shadow World in the hopes of someday learning its secrets. He believes that doing so will enhance his abilities as a spell-caster. He has no loyalty to Taerlyn; he simply wants to see what lies in the Shadow World and take whatever magical items or knowledge he finds there.

When combat erupts, Shaene casts a *blur* spell on himself and attacks using his *spook* and *magic missile* spells. Once these spells are exhausted, he attacks with his crossbow or uses a *wraithform* spell to avoid taking damage. (Ideally, he saves these spells for safe passage through the Shadow World.) If things go badly for Taerlyn and Shaene fails his morale check, he turns against her and sides with the PCs (promising to use his magic to aid the party in the Shadow World).

DM Reminder: The class of magician is unique to Cerilia. Magicians are specialists in the schools of illusion and divination but may learn spells from other schools. In those other schools, however, they are restricted to lesser magic only (1st and 2nd level spells). Consult the BIRTHRIGHT *Rulebook*, page 13, for details.

Parniel (unblooded halfling thief): AL N; AC 7; MV 6; T3; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab; SD halfling spell-like abilities (same as Kylo); D 17, C 15, Ch 15; ML 11; XP 120; PP 30%, OL 45%, F/RT 25%, MS 55%, HS 65%, DN 40%, CW 55%, RL 5%; short sword, sling, 10 sling bullets, dagger (concealed in boot).

Taerlyn believes that Parniel's thieving skills and knowledge of the Shadow World are necessary to complete her quest. The bearded halfling has served Taerlyn countless times in the past and regards her as a trustworthy employer deserving of his loyalty. Parniel's "fees" vary depending on the danger involved, but he expects to receive at least 500 gp for this excursion into the Shadow World.

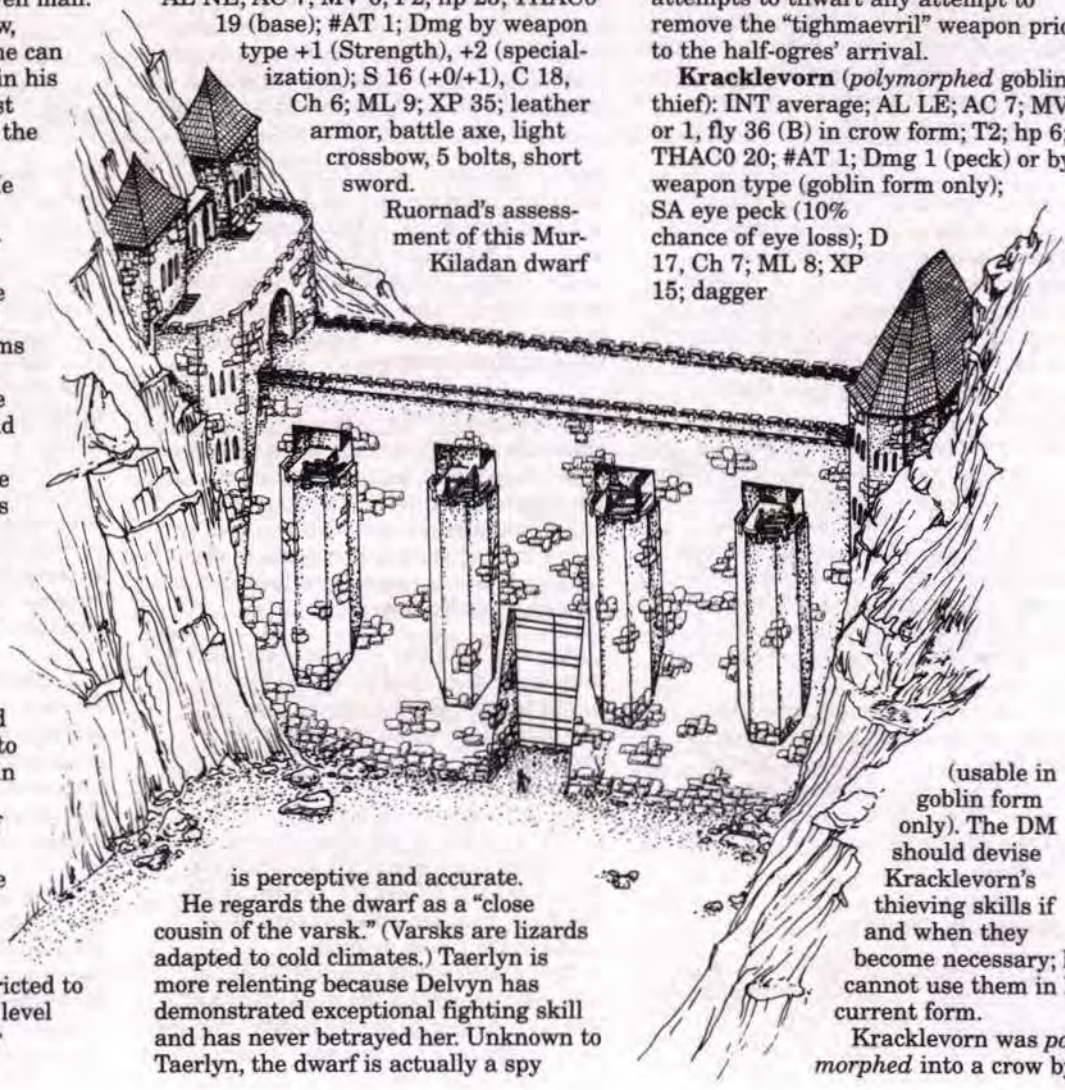
Delvyn (unblooded dwarven fighter): AL NE; AC 7; MV 6; F2; hp 23; THAC0 19 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength), +2 (specialization); S 16 (+0/+1), C 18, Ch 6; ML 9; XP 35; leather armor, battle axe, light crossbow, 5 bolts, short sword.

Ruornad's assessment of this Mur-Kiladan dwarf is perceptive and accurate. He regards the dwarf as a "close cousin of the varsk." (Varsks are lizards adapted to cold climates.) Taerlyn is more relenting because Delvyn has demonstrated exceptional fighting skill and has never betrayed her. Unknown to Taerlyn, the dwarf is actually a spy sent by Razzik Fanggrabber, the goblin-queen of Markazor. At some future date, Delvyn's orders will be to kidnap Taerlyn and blackmail her father into turning his back on Mhoried—the realm he has sworn to protect. (This will occur at roughly the same time Markazor is prepared to invade Mhoried.) Until then, he bides his time and keeps the goblin-queen informed on Taerlyn's activities. If the PCs can find proof of Delvyn's treachery, Taerlyn may look upon them with much less antagonism. (Any future reaction checks are made at +2.)

Delvyn is awaiting the arrival of the Gorgon's henchmen, Skorn and Murkblade. He knows the half-ogres have orders to seize the tighmaevril weapon and return with it to the Gorgon's Crown. At the risk of jeopardizing his role as a spy, Delvyn attempts to thwart any attempt to remove the "tighmaevril" weapon prior to the half-ogres' arrival.

Kracklevorn (*polymorphed* goblin thief): INT average; AL LE; AC 7; MV 6 or 1, fly 36 (B) in crow form; T2; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1 (peck) or by weapon type (goblin form only); SA eye peck (10% chance of eye loss); D 17, Ch 7; ML 8; XP 15; dagger (usable in goblin form only). The DM should devise Kracklevorn's thieving skills if and when they become necessary; he cannot use them in his current form.

Kracklevorn was *polymorphed* into a crow by



New Monsters

When a scion perishes in the Shadow World near Mhelliviene, he becomes either a skelter or a zombire (50% chance of either) with no powers or special abilities beyond those listed below.

Skelters

The skelter is an emaciated creature resembling a lich, with its leathery skin drawn tightly over its bony frame. The eyes of a skelter burn with an intense hatred for all life, and its voice is raspy and spiteful. These gaunt creatures have a chilling touch similar to that of a spectre. The attack inflicts 1d8 hp damage and drains one level of experience from the victim. (A save vs. death magic negates loss.) The energy drain is only temporary, and lost levels (and hit points) are restored at a rate of one level/day. A non-blooded individual slain by a skelter (or drained of all levels) rises as a zombie under the skelter's control; a blooded victim rises as a free-minded skelter.

Skelter: INT very; AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+3; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA energy drain (see above); SD silver or magical weapons needed to hit; immune to cold, poison, paralysis and death magic; MR immune to *sleep, charm, hold* and *fear*-related magic; SZ M; ML 12; XP 650; New Monster. Skelters are turned as ghasts. One vial of holy water causes them 2d4 hp damage.

Zombires

The zombire looks like a normal zombie without the sluggishness. Like the skelter, its eyes glow with intelligence and malice. It does not suffer penalties to initiative and is surprisingly agile. The zombire lacks the energy-draining touch of the skelter, but it can assume *gaseous form* at will. However, it cannot attack in this form and must revert to a corporeal state to inflict damage. (It cannot assume corporeal form and attack in the same round.) The zombire's rake causes 1d8 hp damage, and the victim must save vs. paralysis or be frozen in place and unable to act for 2d6 rounds. Zombires continue to attack frozen victims. A non-blooded individual slain by a zombire rises as a zombie under the zombire's control; a blooded victim rises as a free-minded zombire.

Zombire: INT high; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+2; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA paralyzing touch; SD assume *gaseous form*, silver or magical weapons needed to hit; immune to cold, poison, paralysis and death magic; MR immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and *fear*-related magic; SZ M; ML 14; XP 975; New Monster. Zombires are turned as wraiths. Holy water inflicts 2d4 hp damage/vial.

Skelters and zombires can control mindless undead (i.e., skeletons and zombies) within 30 yards. When slain, skelters and zombires moulder into piles of flesh and bone.

his superiors. Like Delvyn, he is loyal to the goblin-queen of Markazor. However, the goblin tires of his current role (and Delvyn's companionship) and has become quite testy. Several of Taerlyn's mercenaries have come within inches of strangling the bird, and all are fed up with its ceaseless prattle. Kracklevorn speaks Karamhul (dwarven), Goblin, and Anuirean well.

Mercenaries (15 unblooded Anuirean fighters): AL N; AC 5 (6 without shield); MV 12; F1; hp 10 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 15; brigandine armor, wooden shield, heavy crossbow (with 2d6 bolts). Each mercenary wields one of the following melee weapons: footman's mace (33%), long sword (33%) or battle axe (33%).

The mercenaries do not enter the Shadow World. Their job is simply to escort Taerlyn and the other "name" NPCs to Highwall and stand guard in the ruins. They will not voluntarily enter the Shadow World, fearing what lies beyond.

Exploring the Ruins

The upper levels of the fortress are no longer accessible. However, PCs are free to explore what remains of the first level (see map). Taerlyn's mercenaries have already searched the level; they even encountered and killed a giant scorpion holed up in area **8,** but not without losing one of their own (see area **2**). Characters who climb or fly up to the higher levels discover that most of the interior chambers have collapsed or cannot be reached without extensive (and perilous) excavation.

1. Dark Portal.

Mounds of rubble, some piled higher than your head, are all that remain of the wall that once spanned the gorge. Among the rocks, you spot the odd bone, rusted sword, or fragment of armor. Little, however, can be salvaged from the debris.

Anyone with the *shadow walk* ability may enter the Shadow World during daylit hours (as may anyone touching the individual when the crossover is attempted). Such individuals are not obliged to use the fixed portal in this area; however, those who attempt to create a portal in some other area of the fortress must roll for success (see "The Ruins of Highwall" above). If the roll fails, another attempt cannot be made in that area or room.

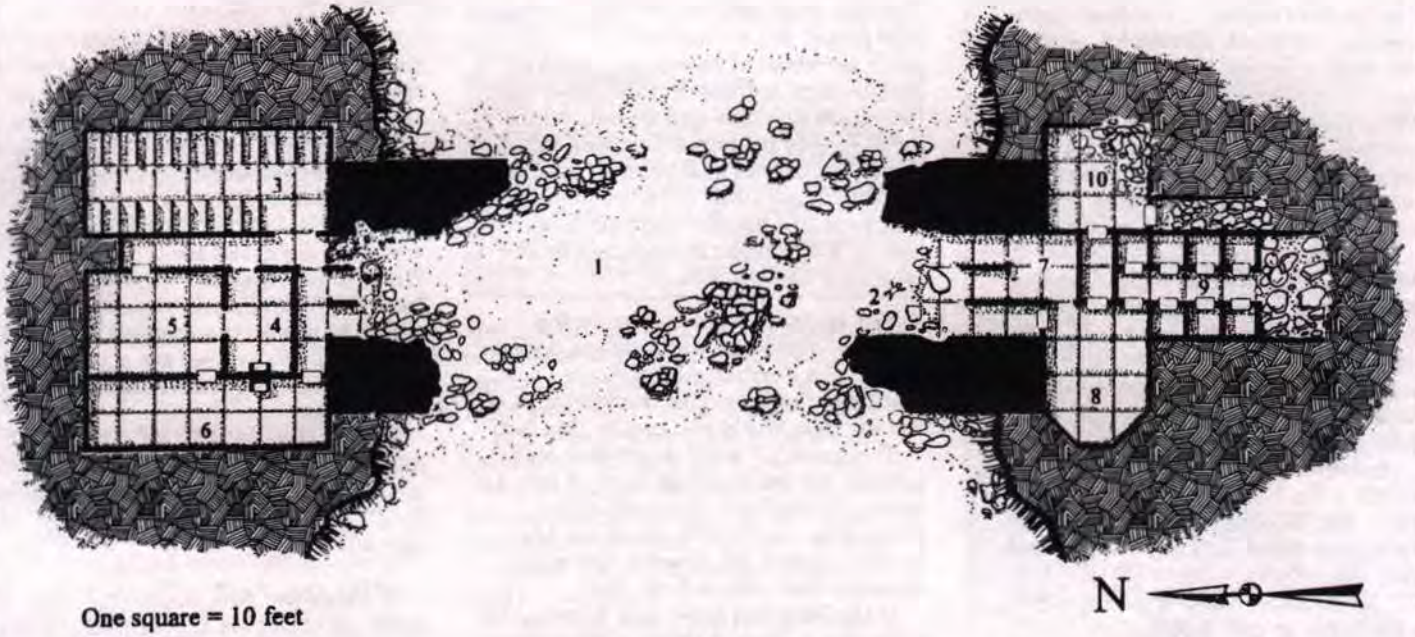
The portal to the Shadow World is located by the **1** on the map. It looks like a jagged, impenetrably dark gap or vent in space. The "doorway" is roughly 6′ × 3′ and has virtually no "thickness." Individuals stepping through this dark orifice are instantly transported to the Shadow World. For non-halflings, this portal is the only route back to Cerilia. Luckily, the portal is a permanent fixture in the Shadow World and may be used any time, day or night. Low-level PCs have no means to collapse or otherwise manipulate the portal, although a *wand of negation* causes it to shut down for 3d4 turns.

Crossing into the Shadow World is a surprisingly painless experience. PCs who walk through the portal are transported from the ruined Cerilian fortress to the perfectly intact (yet haunted) fortress detailed in the "Highwall in Shadows" section.

2. Grave. Here lies the grave of Pierden, a mercenary stung by the giant scorpion in area **8**. Beneath a cairn of piled rocks and a 1′ layer of dirt lies the corpse, still dressed in brigandine armor. The other mercenaries took Pierden's weapons and other possessions.

3. Abandoned Stables. Over the years, the stables have been used by Mhorien and Carielean trade caravans passing through Mhelliviene. PCs and other members of their retinue are free to keep their mounts penned here while they explore the Shadow World.

The Ruins



4. Blackened Fireplace. Formerly a kitchen, this room is bare save for a lone fireplace in the west wall. The hearth has been blackened by years of use. Travelers passing through Mhelliviene often slept here next to the fire.

5. Dusty Dining Hall. The remains of several wrecked tables and benches lie strewn upon the dusty floor. Once a mess hall for the guards, this room has long fallen into disuse.

6. Empty Barracks. Scattered upon the floor of this dusty chamber are bits of wood—the remains of several dozen broken cots. Most of the wood was burned by travelers relying on the warmth of the fireplace to survive cold winter nights.

7. Old Guard Post. A careful search of this room uncovers a silver *dagger +1* hidden beneath a layer of debris in the corner. The dagger, *Spirrlarach* ("Deathfang"), absorbs 1d3 energy-draining attacks before vanishing back to the Negative Material plane. Taerlyn's mercenaries missed this item during their search of the ruins.

8. Giant Scorpion Lair. A dead giant scorpion lies in the middle of this dust-choked room. The creature has been savagely bludgeoned and stabbed. The mercenaries were attacked by the scorpion when they entered area **7**; the scorpion chased them outside, where it killed Pierden (see area **2**). The monster was pressed back into its lair, where it met its eventual end. PC thieves may try to extract some of the scorpion's venom (Type F) for future use. There's enough poison remaining for six applications.

9. Dungeon. The far end of this corridor has completely collapsed, filling four cells with rubble and leaving seven others intact. Each cell is sealed by a sturdy wooden door set with a small, barred window. The doors are not locked, and PCs searching the cells find cobwebs and bones, and little else.

10. Collapsed Room. The ceiling in the southeast corner of this room has collapsed, creating a large rubble heap. A skeletal arm sticks out of the debris, and PCs who unpile the nearby rocks can unearth the skeleton of a human adventurer slain by the collapse. The skeleton wears tattered leather armor and has three gold teeth (worth 1 gp apiece). The southern door leads to a staircase buried under tons of rock and fallen debris. There is no way to reach the upper floors via these stairs.

The ceiling of the chamber is unsafe. Any loud noise has a 75% chance of triggering further collapse. Anyone inside the room when the ceiling falls must save vs. petrification or be struck by falling debris (4d6 hp damage) and buried under piles of rock. PCs not killed or rendered unconscious by the debris may dig themselves out in 2d6 rounds.

Highwall in Shadows

To locate the tighmaevril weapon, the PCs must explore the Shadow World fortress of Highwall. Unlike its Cerilian counterpart, this fortress remains intact. The interior is very dark, so the PCs need light sources.

The Shadow World's landscape is eerily similar to that of Cerilia, yet everything seems tainted by a dark, pervading gloom. The world looks dim, shadows take strange shapes, and the sun is nothing more than a dull silver orb surrounded by dark clouds. The Shadow World is populated by undead creatures that roam the land by day and night. The fortress itself is guarded by the undead remnants of Anuirean soldiers slain in Mhelliviene roughly

1,000 years ago. (See "The Shadow World" for details.)

Most of the travelers who passed through the shadow portal perished at the hands of Highwall's undead garrison. Some of these travelers now patrol the fortress as zombies while others, dead for centuries, walk as skeletons. Most of the fortress' guards are minor undead, but there are far greater horrors lurking within Highwall. Unless otherwise noted, all humanoid skeletons and zombies have the following statistics:

Skeletons: INT non-; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SD edged and piercing weapons inflict half damage; MR immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear,* poison, paralysis, death magic, and cold-based attacks; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65; *MM*/315.

Zombies: INT non-; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear,* death magic, paralysis, poison, and cold-based attacks; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65; *MM*/373. Zombies always attack last in melee.

Key NPC Reactions

Taerlyn and her retinue have mixed reactions to Highwall's undead garrison. They are prepared for hostilities and fight mindless undead without deliberation (allowing PCs to lead the charge, if possible). However, Shaene uses his *wraithform* spell to protect himself against the tougher undead creatures, and Parniel the halfling returns to Cerilia the instant things get ugly. The intelligent undead encountered in Highwall—the skelters and zombires (see "New Monsters" sidebar for details)—are each vying for command of the fortress. If Taerlyn uncovers their power struggle, she promises military aid to those who guide her safely to the tighmaevril. For the most part, these undead creatures are not open to negotiations. They attack Taerlyn's band (and any PCs) out of sheer spite.

Taerlyn does not abandon her quest for the tighmaevril unless her retinue is decimated. For reasons detailed in the "Taerlyn & Company" section, Shaene Nagor prefers to stay in the Shadow World and offers his services to the PCs if they intend to remain. If Taerlyn is forced to leave and re-group, she returns in two weeks with a retinue twice as large.

Level One

1. Through the Portal.

> A sudden, unpleasant chill ripples through your body as you step through the portal. For a brief moment, you hear the clash of swords and cries of battle, then nothing. On the other side, there are no ruins and no indications of life—only darkness. Drawing upon a light source, you find yourself standing in a stale, unlit chamber pressed between two pairs of gigantic stone doors. Every noise is amplified by the chamber's emptiness.

The portal is forever open in the Shadow World and continues to operate even if the Cerilian portal closes. Halflings familiar with the workings of the Shadow World can certify this fact.

The giant 20′ × 10′ doors that lead outside are too heavy to force or break open, although a *knock* spell opens them. The winches for the doors are located in area **19,** directly above the chamber but hidden from view.

If the PCs find some way to open the outer doors, they may leave the fortress and explore the rest of the Shadow World. (From outside, PCs are afforded an unobstructed view of the fortress exterior.) If the party leaves Highwall, they are pursued by 2d6 skeletons astride skeletal horses (see area **3** for statistics). The skeletons emerge from the fortress 1d6 turns after the party. Characters who stray more than 20 yards from the fortress may also be spotted by the skeletons in the catapult towers (area **18**).

2. Archers' Gauntlet. These enclosed corridors are known collectively as the archers' gauntlet—a deadly defense against invaders who manage to breach the outer doors. The walls in each corridor are perforated with arrow slits, seven per side. Both corridors are empty and unlit.

3. Skeletal Steeds. Confined to the stalls of this unlit stablehouse are the skeletal remains of 12 light warhorses. Although the undead horses are trapped in the stalls, they can bite anyone who gets too close. Taerlyn and her band have the good sense to keep their distance. The stalls contain pieces of rusted barding and little else.

Skeletal warhorses (12): INT non-; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 3; hp 15 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (hooves) or 1d4 (bite); SD as skeleton; SZ L; ML 20; XP 175; *MM*/194 (horse, light war), *MM*/315 (skeleton, animal—modified).

4. Zombie Brew. Two wooden tables stand in the middle of this cluttered, cobweb-draped kitchen. The walls are lined with shelves and cooking implements, while fuming over a hot fire is a cauldron of foul-smelling soup. The brew contains old bones, bits of cloth, and other debris. Stoking the fire and watching the broth are three zombies. When someone enters the kitchen, the "cooks" turn to attack.

In addition to the zombies, PCs entering this chamber are attacked by seven animated rat skeletons hiding on the shelves.

Rat skeletons (7): INT non-; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 1–1; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SD as skeleton; SZ S; ML 20; XP 65; *MM*/315 (skeleton, animal).

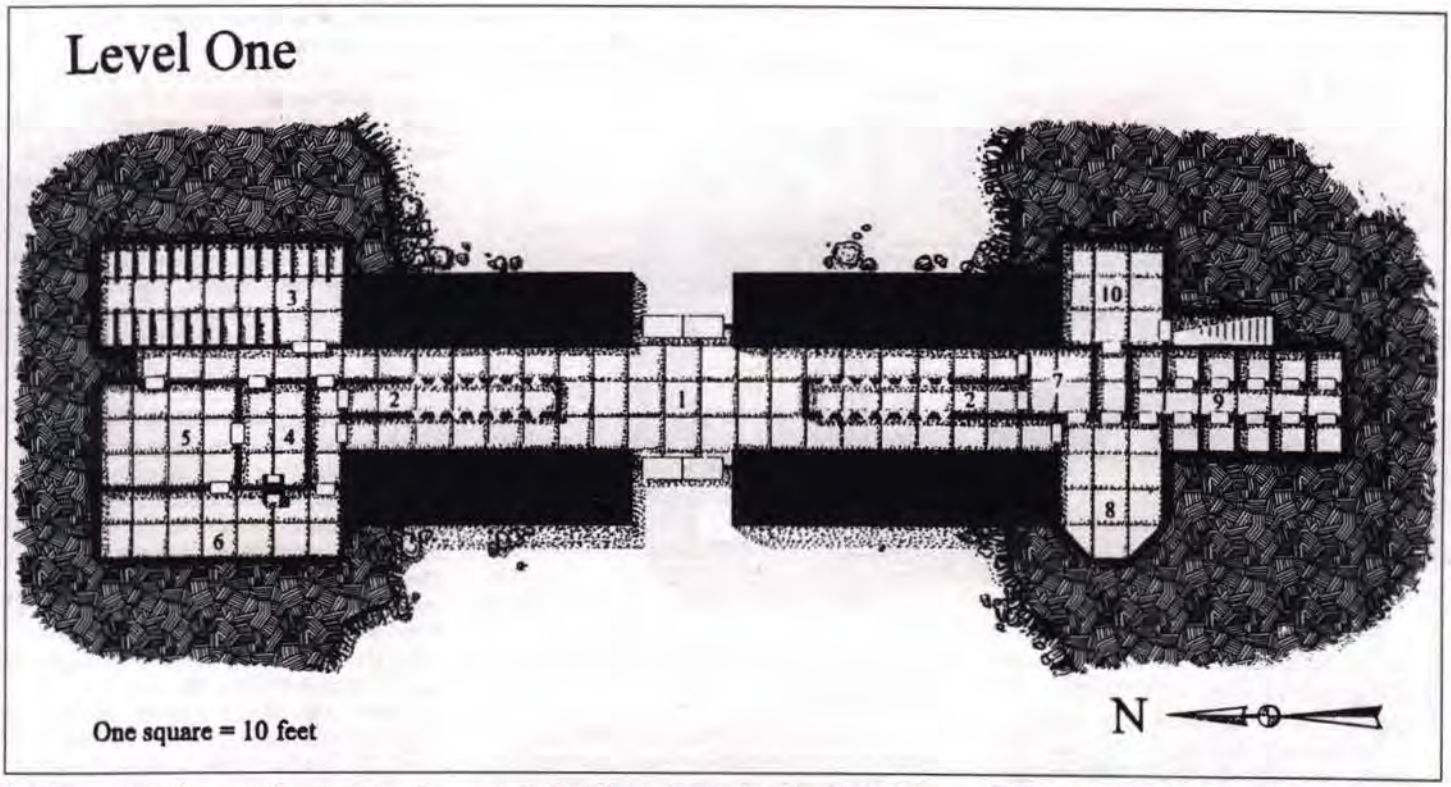
5. Skeleton Ale. Inside this unlit room, 18 skeletons are "drinking" fouled ale from dented copper mugs, inadvertently dousing themselves with the putrid brine. The skeletons are seated on benches around two large tables. The tabletops are strewn with broken dishware, bones, and unlit candelabra.

If intruders enter the chamber, the skeletons rise from their seats and attack with rusted weapons and clubs made of wood and bone. Combat in this chamber is 90% likely to attract the attention of the skeletons in area **6,** which arrive the following round.

6. Light Sleepers. Four tapestries hang on the western wall of this firelit chamber. The tapestries (worth 100 gp each) depict bloody scenes of battle.

Twenty wooden cots have been pushed against the walls, and slumped in each cot is a skeleton wearing tattered chain mail. The 20 skeletons rise to attack the instant someone enters the room. Their swords lie beneath the cots. Their tattered armor does not improve their AC. If combat erupts in this chamber, the noise has a 25% chance/round of alerting the skeletons in area **5** (which arrive the following round).

7. Sign In or Sign Out. This chamber is furnished with a desk and chair. Hanging on the wall behind the desk is a shredded tapestry depicting the



Anuirean coat-of-arms. The once-exquisite tapestry (worth 400 gp intact) can be repaired using *mending* spells. Seated behind the desk is an animated skeleton. When intruders enter the room, the skeleton dips an old quill pen into an empty ink jar, opens a dried-out ledger, and hands the pen to the nearest PC. The ledger records the names of all individuals or caravans that pass through Highwall; however, there are no names presently in the book, and the quill pen is dry. Unless the PCs pretend the sign the book, the skeleton attacks. The ensuing fight draws the attention of the zombire in area **8,** which assumes *gaseous form* and arrives in one round.

8. Priestly Remains. This chamber contains four cots and a wooden table surrounded by four chairs. A footman's mace and a key ring (with keys to the cells in area **9**) lie atop the table. Standing next to the door to area **9** is a zombire dressed in a tunic bearing the sword-and-lightning symbol of Cuiraecen (the Anuirean god of battle). Around her neck hangs a golden, disk-shaped holy symbol engraved with a lightning bolt (150 gp). The zombire is listening to tortured screams emanating from the dungeon. Her expression, like a jack-o'-lantern, is one of twisted delight. When she spots intruders, the zombire attacks. If reduced to half hit points, she assumes *gaseous form* and hides in a crack in the ceiling. At the earliest opportunity, she re-forms and attacks the party from behind.

Maeve (zombire): hp 18; see "New Monsters" for full statistics. Maeve served as a healer in the doomed Anuirean army and perished with the soldiers over 1,000 years ago. Hateful and malevolent, Maeve now relishes any opportunity to inflict pain upon the living and the dead. Maeve hates the other zombires and skelters stationed at Highwall. She intends to seize control of the fortress once her rivals have destroyed one another (see areas **37, 42,** and **44** for details).

9. Tormented Souls. Confined to the eastern row of cells are six heucuvae trapped by the zombire Maeve. The heucuvae can *polymorph self* up to three times/day and have assumed the forms of scrawny, undernourished humans (captured travelers) to dupe PCs into releasing them. If the PCs unlock the doors, the prisoners wait until all six are freed before assuming their true undead forms and attacking.

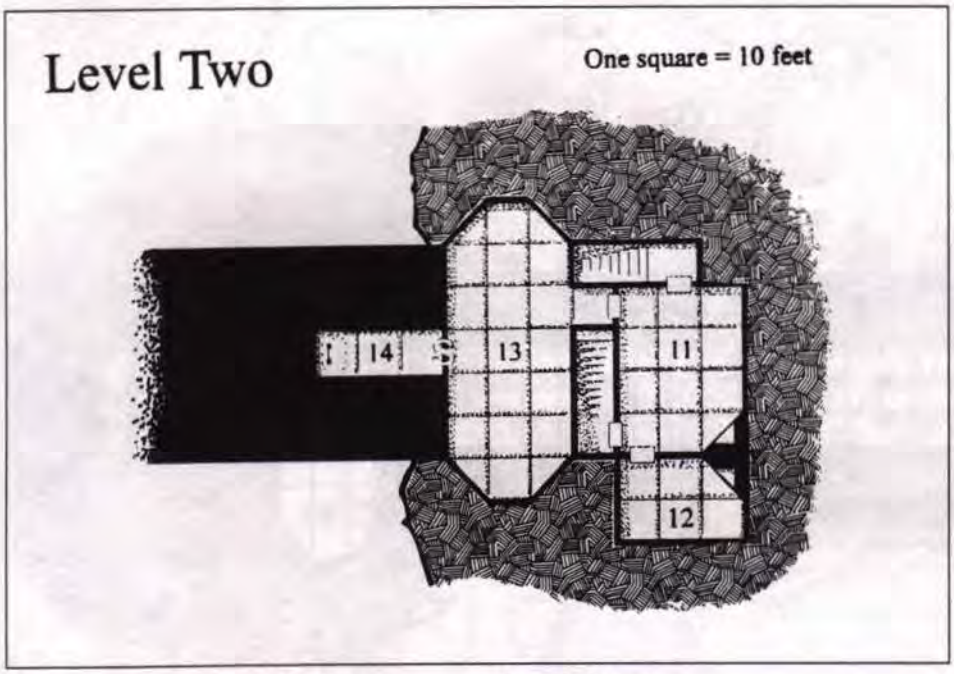
Heucuva (6): INT semi; AL CE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 2; hp 12 (×2), 11 (×2), 10, 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA disease; SD silver or magical weapons to hit; *polymorph self* 3 times/day (humanoid form only); MR immune to mind-influencing spells; SZ M; ML 11; XP 270; *MM*/188.

10. Dusty Shield. Gloom pervades this dusty, cobweb-draped guard post. Lying on the floor beneath a layer of dust is a shield bearing the crest of Cuiraecen (a sword overlapping a lightning bolt, set against a crimson background). This non-magical shield once belonged to the priestess in area **8**.

Level Two

11. A Real Mess Hall. Heaped near the fireplace are the remains of three tables. Several dozen chairs have been pushed against the walls, leaving a large open space in the middle of the room. Any loud noises here have a 3-in-6 chance of alerting the skeletons in area **13,** which appear the following round.

12. Creepy Crawlies. This kitchen is draped in cobwebs and shrouded with dust. The walls are lined with shelves, and a large table stands in the middle of the floor. Clinging to the underside of the table are three large zombie spiders.



These slower versions of the living breed still have poisonous bites (not to mention a nasty drooling habit) but no web-spinning capability. All of them are missing legs and eyes—a dead giveaway to their true nature.

Zombie spiders (3): INT non-; AL N; AC 8; MV 3; HD 1+1; hp 7 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (Type A, save at +2); SD as zombie; SZ S (2' diameter); ML 20; XP 120; *MM*/326 (spider, large—modified), *MM*/373 (zombie).

13. Barracks of the Bone-Men. This chamber is currently occupied by 35 skeletons equipped with short swords and dressed in tattered chain mail (no improvement to AC). They attack intruders on sight, pursuing them anywhere within the fortress. Positioned against the walls are 30 wooden cots. Hanging on the walls are seven banners depicting the crests of various Anuirean deities. These banners are in poor condition and are worth 10 gp each. Behind one of the banners is a secret door leading to area **14.**

14. Secret Access. This secret room is empty save for an iron ladder secured to the northern wall. The ladder ends before an unlocked wooden trap door leading to area **17.**

Level Three

15. Armor Fitting. This room is taken up by five tables, each covered with fragments of armor. From the pieces, an armorer can assemble 15 suits of chain mail, 10 suits of plate mail, and 6 suits of banded mail. The armor is dusty, and some of the pieces have rusted from disuse, but otherwise the fragments are intact.

16. Armor Storage. Hanging from iron hooks on the walls are several suits of armor (four suits of plate mail and five suits of chain mail) as well as 10 non-magical shields. All the shields bear the arms of the old Anuirean empire.

17. Secret Access. Set into the floor is a wooden trap door leading to area **14.** This room is dusty and filled with cobwebs.

18. Within Boneshot. Highwall's greatest line of defense consists of eight identical catapult towers jutting from the sides of the fortress. Each platform is enclosed by a 3' high stone battlement and positioned in the middle of the platform is a catapult. Stacked in the corner behind each catapult is a pile of 1d4+4 shots (small, round boulders).

Guarding each catapult are four skeletons (32 total). If intruders are detected in the hallway connecting the platforms, the skeletons move in to attack. Likewise, if targets are spotted outside the fortress (within range of the catapults) the skeletons open fire. The catapults have been poorly maintained, and each catapult has a 25% chance of breaking when used. The range of each catapult is 60/180/540, although targets within 20 yards cannot be hit. Base THAC0 is 17, and each shot inflicts 2d8 hp damage (2d10 hp to large-sized targets). Loading a catapult normally requires three rounds, but the less-coordinated skeletons require five rounds.

19. Turning the Winch. Mounted on the west and east walls of this chamber are two large wooden wheels. Turning the wheels clockwise opens the great stone doors in area **1,** while turning counter-clockwise closes and seals the doors. The wheels are connected to an elaborate chain and pulley system. A bend bars roll at +10% is needed to turn the wheel. (Up to three individuals may attempt to turn the wheel at once, in which case they may combine their bend bars percentages.) Any attempt to turn the winch attracts the attention of the skeletons in area **18,** which attack the following round.

20. Skulking Shadows. This room contains three simple cots. Lurking in the darkness are three shadows—intruders that the skeletons and zombies have been unable to drive away. The shadows attack any living creatures they encounter.

Shadows (3): INT low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 17, 16, 11; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1; SA Strength drain; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and cold-based spells; SZ M; ML 16; XP 420; *MM*/312.

21. Guard Post. This area is furnished as area **20.** However, this guard post is currently unoccupied.

22. Rotten to the Core. A foul stench pervades this dark chamber. Occupying the former barracks and dressed in pieces of tattered armor are 12 badly-decayed zombies and 15 skeletons. Lying on the floor are several dozen smashed cots, chairs, and tables. Three torn banners hang on the western wall—one bearing the arms of the old Anuirean empire, flanked by banners depicting bloody scenes of battle.

The banners are worthless. A staircase leads up to area **35.**

23. Screaming Head. Two long tables occupy most of the floorspace, although a smaller table (reserved for officers) rests near the door to the kitchen. Surrounding the tables are dozens of chairs, while the tables themselves are cluttered with dirty and broken dishware. Hanging above the tables are three iron chandeliers suspended by chains. The blackened fireplaces along the north wall are unlit, and the floor is covered with patches of soot. Above the fireplaces hangs the mounted head of an orog chieftain. Two dusty tapestries depicting Highwall (worth 180 gp each) hang on the western wall.

Feasting on the scraps of food are nine giant zombie rats and 15 normal skeletal rats (see area **3** for statistics). The undead rats have a 1 in 4 chance per round of attacking any living thing in the room. Three rounds after intruders enter the room, the mounted orog's head animates and begins shouting orog death cries and war chants. The noise is loud enough to be annoying but not loud enough to disrupt spellcasting. The head is considered AC 10 with 9 hp for attack purposes. If reduced to 0 hp, the screaming orog's head "dies."

On the floor beneath the officers' table is a decorative gold medallion shaped like a pegasus (worth 125 gp).

Giant zombie rats (9): INT non-; AL N; AC 8; MV 3; HD 1–1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SD as zombie; SZ S (2′ long); ML 20; XP 35; *MM*/300 (rat, giant—modified), *MM*/373 (zombie). Each rat is infested with 2d6 rot grubs (see *MM*/364 for statistics) which can attack only if the zombie rat is handled.

24. Kitchen. This cluttered kitchen is in complete disarray. Broken dishes and utensils lie scattered on the floor, and shelves are cluttered with dusty pots and overturned jars of foodstuffs. PCs searching the shelves find two labeled potions (*invisibility* and *treasure finding*). Anyone drinking the *potion of treasure finding* is drawn to area **48.**

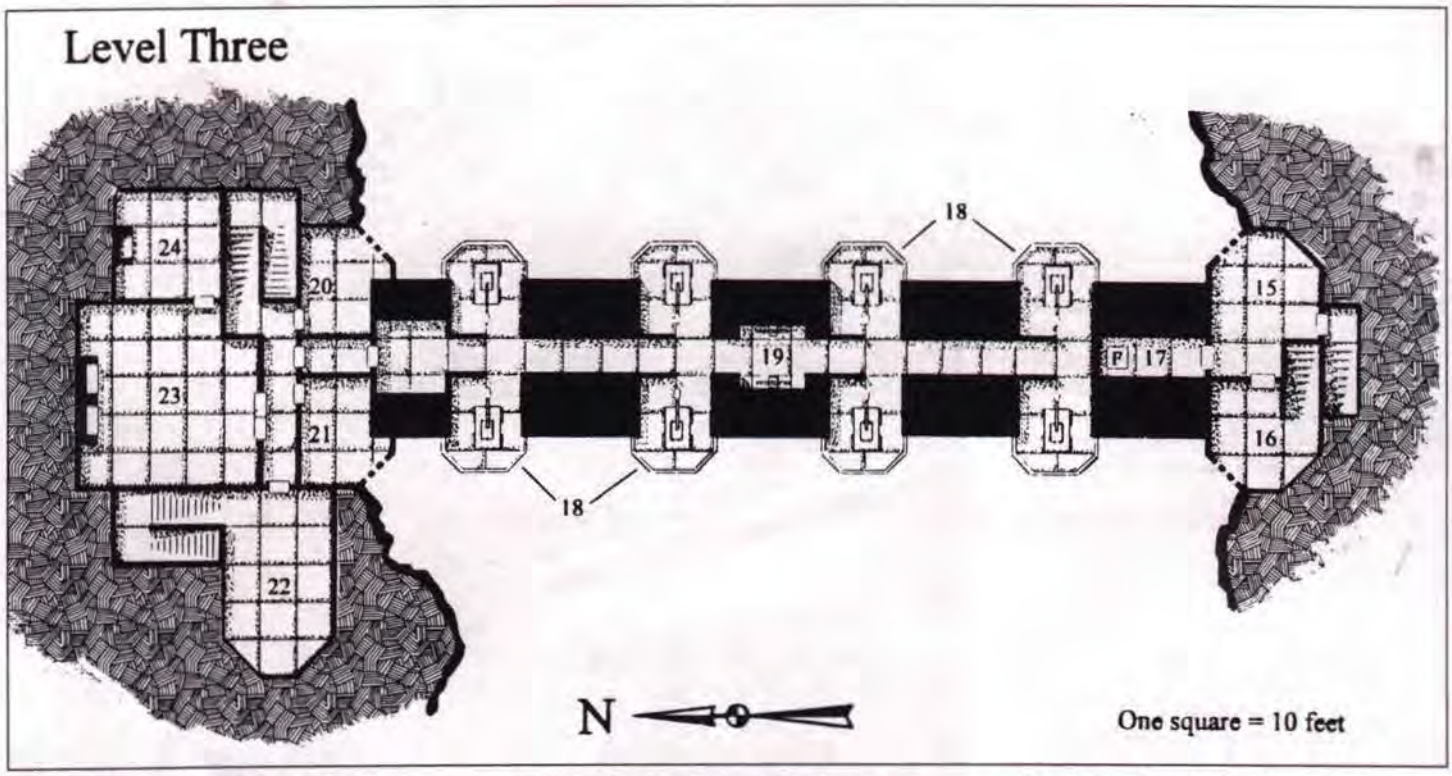
Level Four

25. Winch Room. Mounted on the north wall of this unfurnished guard post is the winch mechanism for the nearby portcullis (area **30**). Turning the handle clockwise raises the iron portcullis; releasing a latch on the winch drops the gate in one segment. Anyone tampering with the winch alerts the undead in areas **26** and **28,** and they arrive the following round.

26. Undead Captain. This room's furnishings include a large padded bed positioned against the west wall between a heavy wooden trunk and a tall, slender wardrobe. Dusty animal furs cover the cold stone floor, and a tapestry depicting the Anuirean arms (worth 250 gp; weighs 40 lbs.) hangs on the eastern wall (concealing the secret door to area **27**). Facing the south wall is a desk with matching chair, and standing next to the desk is a 4′-high leering gargoyle carved from black stone (worth 100 gp; weighs 120 lbs).

Occupying this room is the Captain of the South Citadel—a skelter. The creature wears a suit of chain mail draped in cobwebs. Strapped to its side is a *long sword +1* named *Sentinel* (no special abilities), but the skelter prefers to use its energy drain. Given the chance, the skelter opens the trunk next to the bed (see below) before attacking.

The large wooden trunk contains nine skeletal bats that flutter out when the lid is opened. The bats do not attack the skelter, nor do they follow Elamien's orders. They attack intruders until turned or destroyed. The trunk is otherwise empty. The skelter's desk and wardrobe are devoid of contents.



However, tucked under the desk is a locked wooden coffer containing 65 sp and a small silver key (to the desk in area **43**).

Elamien (skelter): AC 5; hp 14; see page 18 for statistics. This skelter is the evil incarnation of a bold Anuirean officer who died in Mhelliviene nearly 1,000 years ago. Elamien is bitter over the defeat of the Anuirean army and blames General Anuvier (see area **44**) for the massacre.

Elamien wants to destroy the zombire Anuvier and install himself as Highwall's new commander—a plan he's all too willing to share with the PCs as he rips them to pieces. If the PCs or NPCs offer assistance, Elamien agrees to spare their lives and surrender the tighmaevril weapon on the condition they destroy both Anuvier (area **44**) and Draecus (area **35**). However, the chaotic evil skelter has no intention of honoring his side of the agreement.

Skeletal bats (9): INT non-; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 1–1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SD as skeleton; SZ S; ML 20; XP 65; *MM*/315 (skeleton, animal).

27. Roughly-hewn Passage. This tunnel ends some 60′ above the floor of the mountain gorge. The climb down is deceptively treacherous, as there are few stable handholds (climbing checks at –15%). Debris covers the floor of the passageway, and clinging to the ceiling half way down the hall is an ochre jelly. The jelly has crawled into a narrow crack and is visible only to PCs searching for traps.

Ochre jelly: INT non-; AL N; AC 8; MV 3; HD 6; hp 19; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4; SA surprise (–3 to opponents' rolls); SD lightning divides jelly; SZ M (4′ diameter); ML 10; XP 270; *MM*/278 (oozes/slimes/jellies).

28. Weapons. Two weapon racks stand in the middle of this dimly lit room. The first rack holds four long swords, nine broad swords, and 19 spears. The second rack holds 14 long bows and eight light crossbows. The weapons are in poor condition and break on a failed attack roll of 1 or 2 (d20). Against the north wall sit two unlocked wooden chests. Each chest contains 8d6 flight arrows and 5d6 light crossbow bolts.

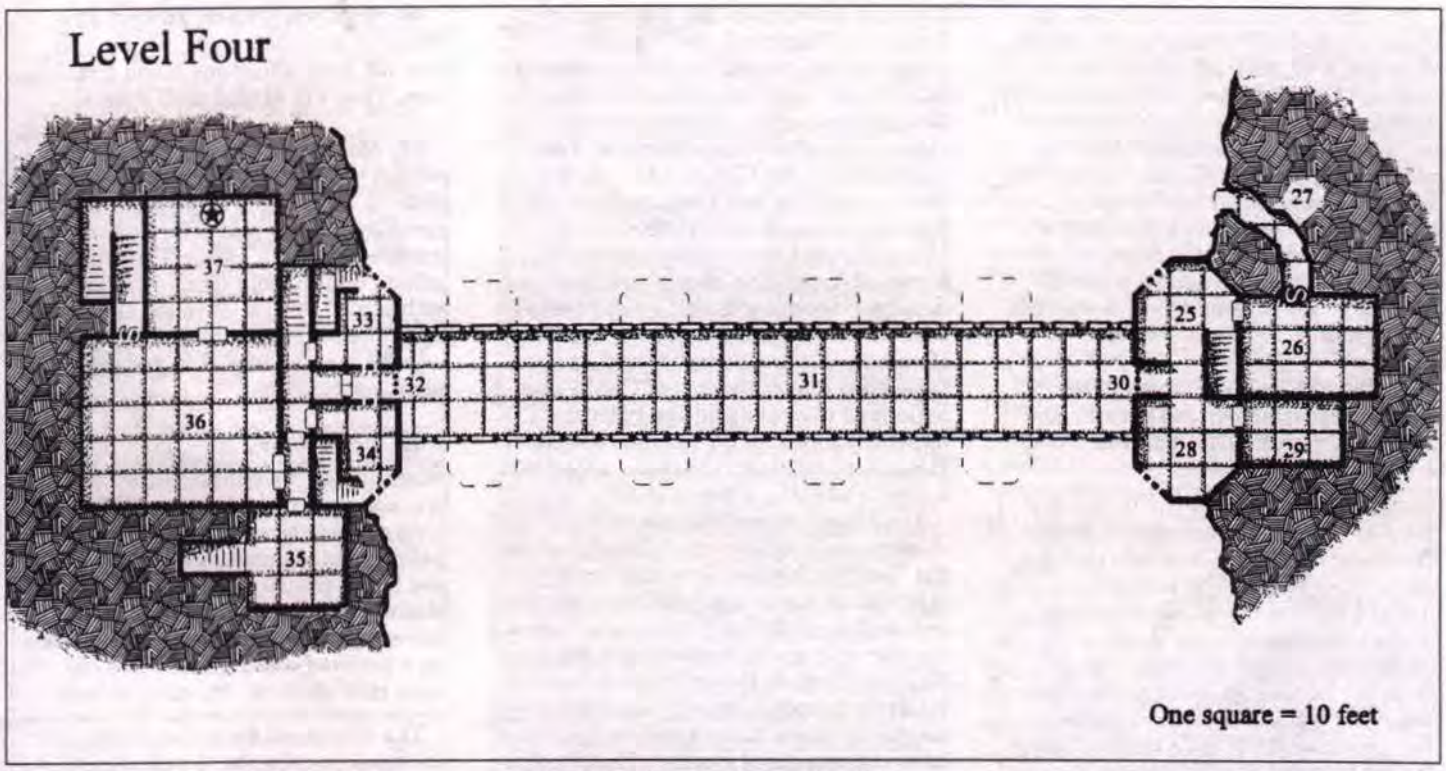
29. Gatehouse Barracks. This chamber's furnishings include six wooden cots spaced along the walls and a locked wooden chest containing a gray cloak, a folded black banner sewn with silver thread (depicts a silver skull; worth 75 gp) and a blackened silver brazier (worth 90 gp).

30. South Portcullis. The winch for this portcullis is located in area **25.** Lifting the portcullis requires a successful lift gates roll. If two PCs try to life the gate, one roll should be made against their cumulative percentage. No more than two individuals may attempt to lift the gate at once.

31. Top of the Wall.

> You find yourself standing atop the great wall, enclosed on both sides by a crumbling stone battlement. The view of Mhelliviene to the west and east is spectacular despite the dark sky and looming mountains. A stiff wind blows from the west, putrid as the breath of some great carnivore.

Although the wall itself is devoid of guardians, the PCs must concern themselves with the 10 skeletons stationed on the north balcony (area **38**). These skeletal archers begin shooting bone arrows (Dmg 1d6) when anyone closes within 100′ of the northern portcullis. The PCs and NPCs can spot the archers immediately, and a successful Intelligence check verifies that the archers are nocking



arrows to attack. The skeletons have 75% cover behind the battlements, improving their AC to 0.

Shortly after the skeletons unleash their arrows, a gloomwing descends from the shadowy sky to attack any living creature on the wall. The gloomwing's natural camouflage makes it 50% undetectable in the Shadow World's dark twilight. Its initial swoop attack is +2 to hit. On the second and each successive round of combat, the moth emits a potent pheromone which causes weakness in a 25′ radius (see below).

Gloomwing: INT animal; AL N; AC 1; MV 2, fly 18 (D); HD 5+1; hp 32; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d8; SA pheromone (lose 1 point of Strength/round; victim falls unconscious at 0 Strength); SD confusion; SZ M (8′ wingspan); ML 8; XP 1,400; *MM*/157.

32. North Portcullis. This portcullis is identical to the one in area **30,** except that the winch is located in area **33.** Unless they have some other way of reaching area **33,** the PCs must lift this gate to enter the north citadel. Just beyond the portcullis is a 15′-long hall with two arrow slits in each wall. Any intruder walking between the arrow slits is attacked by the skeletal archers in areas **33** and **34.**

33. Winch Room. Occupying this room are two skeletons armed with short bows and short swords. Slung over their bony shoulders is a quiver of 2d6 flight arrows. The skeletons use their bows to shoot intruders through the arrow slits. Set into the southern wall is a wooden winch mechanism for the portcullis is area **32.** The winch operates just as does the one in area **25.**

34. Skeletal Sentries. Two skeletons (see area **33** for equipment) stand guard in this room. Near the flight of stairs sits an unlocked wooden chest containing 5d6 flight arrows.

35. Helter Skelter. This room is occupied by the Captain of the North Citadel, a skelter dressed in a blood-stained suit of banded mail. The skelter's full helm hides everything except its glowing red eyes, which burn with malevolence. The skelter is accompanied by four zombies wearing chain mail (AC 5). With its cold, raspy voice, it orders the zombies to attack intruders on sight. The skelter despises the living and cannot be assuaged. The sound of combat alerts the undead in area **22,** which arrive in 1d4 rounds.

The skelter's room is furnished with a large stuffed bed, a padded armchair (torn), two torn tapestries on the west and south walls (depicting the battle between the Anuireans and Sidhelien in Mhelliviene; worth 650 gp if mended), and a wooden chest (unlocked) containing a scroll of *protection from cold* hidden under 329 cp and 112 sp.

Draecus (skelter): AC 4; hp 15; see page 18 for full statistics. This evil undead creature is all that remains of a former Anuirean army officer. Despite the crushing defeat of the Anuirean army, Draecus remains loyal to General Anuvier (see area **44**), opposing his skelter rival Elamien (area **26**) at every opportunity.

36. Armed Guardians. The walls of this 60′ × 50′ chamber are lined with worn and worthless tapestries depicting the Battle of Mount Deismaar and the destruction of the old gods. Dividing up the chamber are several rows of wooden cots. The floor is strewn with weapons (axes, daggers, and spears) and bones. Hidden among the inanimate bones are four dreads (animated pairs of skeletal arms). If the doors to area **37** are touched or the secret door leading to the eastern staircase is opened, the dreads rise from the floor and attack with spears (using both hands).

Dreads (4): INT non-; AL N; AC 6; MV 6, fly 15 (B); HD 3+3; hp 21, 18, 15, 15; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 or by weapon (1d6 with spear); SD immune to *charm, hold, sleep, shatter, disintegrate* and *polymorph* spells; impervious to cold; edged/piercing weapons inflict half damage; regenerate 2 hp/day; SZ S; ML 20; XP 975; *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Annual,* Volume 1. In the Shadow World, dreads are turned as wraiths and suffer 2d4 hp damage from one vial of holy water.

37. Transformed Temple. The doors to this chamber are slender and made of beaten bronze. The doors may be opened easily.

> Inside the chamber, opposite the double doors, stands a statue of a skull-faced warrior, seven feet tall, clutching a black shield. The statue is flanked by two tapestries depicting robed skeletons astride black warhorses. Larger tapestries hang from the north and south walls, these depicting legions of undead soldiers. The chamber itself feels colder than the other areas of the fortress.

PCs who spend more than one round in this chamber are attacked by a zombire that has assumed *gaseous form* and hidden itself behind the black shield. At the earliest moment, it seeps forth and reverts to its corporeal form. If reduced to 9 or fewer hp, the zombire reverts to *gaseous form* and retreats to area **35.**

Ruinil (zombire): hp 19; see page 26 for full statistics. Accused of bewitching an Anuirean regent, the wizard Ruinil fled to the Shadow World to escape persecution. He tried to seize control of the fortress, lost a battle with Anuvier (see area **44**), and was transformed into a free-minded zombire. Deprived of his life and spells, Ruinil resents Anuvier but now gives the former Anuirean general a wide berth.

Ruinil is secretly allied with the wizard-turned-skelter Jadrele (area **42**) in a scheme to overthrow Anuvier and seize control of Highwall. If the PCs manage to open a dialogue with Ruinil, they may offer assistance in exchange for safe removal of the tighmaevril weapon. Ruinil knows where the spear is stored (area **49**) but he only escorts the PCs and NPCs to Jadrele's chamber.

The Shadow World's version of the temple and the statue are drastically different from those in the ruined Cerilian fortress. In the Cerilian fortress of Highwall, this temple is intact (albeit buried behind mounds of fallen rock) and dedicated to Haelyn, the Anuirean god of noble war; the statue is crafted in his likeness. The tapestries in the Cerilian temple depict Haelyn and his half-brother Roele fighting at the Battle of Mount Deismaar and their victory over the forces of Azrai. The statue's shield depicts Haelyn's symbol: a sword and sunburst set against a red background. However, in the Shadow World, the tapestries depict images of Death and legions of skeletal soldiers cutting down the forces of humanity. Instead of Haelyn, the statue resembles a skeletal knight clutching a black shield.

Halflings and individuals with the shadow walk ability who "phase" back to the Cerilian fortress from this room materialize inside the "real temple" (the one dedicated to Haelyn) and can view its alternate decor. Returning to the Shadow World is the only way to leave Haelyn's temple, however, since the surrounding rooms in the Cerilian fortress have collapsed and blocked the only exit.

The skeletal knight's black shield has a *glyph of warding* cast on it. Any living person who touches the shield must save vs. spell or lose one energy level permanently. The *glyph* can be triggered only once.

Level Five

38. Bones and Arrows. This balcony is surrounded by a 4′ high stone battlement. Standing on the balcony, overlooking area **31,** are 10 skeletons armed with short bows and short swords. Slung over their bony shoulderblades are quivers containing 2d6 bone arrows apiece (Dmg 1d6). The skeletons can shoot one arrow/round and use their bows to attack intruders on the fortress wall; in melee combat, they use their swords and fight relentlessly. Any combat atop this platform alerts the undead in areas **39** and **40,** which emerge from the guard towers the following round.

39. Eastern Guard Tower. The roof of this tower reaches its apex 30′ above the floor. An unlit lantern hangs from one of the ceiling rafters. Standing guard in this room are four skeletons armed with spears. They attack any living creature they encounter.

40. Western Guard Tower. This chamber is similar in all respects to area **39.** Four skeletons stand guard here. They are armed with spears.

41. Magic Glyph. This 10′ × 10′ section of hallway is trapped by a *glyph of warding.* The *glyph* is triggered by living creatures; undead may traverse the area safely. The *glyph* inflicts 5d4 hp cold damage to anyone within a 5′ radius (save for half damage). The *protection from cold* scroll in area **35** may be useful in reducing or negating damage.

42. Remnants.

> Standing in the middle of this dusty chamber are three humanoid figures. Two of them stand nearly nine feet tall. To your horror and disgust, you see bones protruding from their rotten flesh. A hunched figure stands between them. The creature is dressed in a tattered wizard's robe and has eyes that glow like burning embers.

The chamber's furnishings are shrouded in cobwebs. A bed rests against the north wall, a tall wardrobe stands against the west wall, and a desk has been pushed against the south wall beneath two cluttered shelves.

The desk and wardrobe are empty. The shelves hold little of value aside from some skulls and jars of dust (former spell components). If the PCs are having difficulty completing the adventure, the DM may place a *potion of undead control* here. The potion controls up to 16 HD of skeletons or zombies.

The three undead are a skelter and two monster zombies. The skelter is all that's left of an Anuirean army sorceress who died in Mhelliviene centuries ago. Jadrele wields a *wand of magic missiles* (57 charges) and uses it without reservation. The zombies are all that remain of two ogres who dared to walk through the shadow portal in area **1.**

Jadrele has pledged her "undying allegiance" to the zombire Anuvier (see area **44**) while maintaining a secret alliance with Anuvier's rival, Ruinil (area **37**). Unless the PCs are accompanied by Ruinil, Jadrele assumes they were sent by one of her rivals (probably Anuvier). In this case, she orders the ogre zombies to attack, while employing her magical wand. Otherwise, she is willing to communicate with strangers.

Jadrele (skelter): hp 17; see page 18 for full statistics. Jadrele secretly aspires to overthrow the zombire Anuvier and seize control of the fortress. First she must eliminate the citadel commanders, Elamien (area **26**) and Draecus (area **35**). Then, with Ruinil's help (area **37**), she plans to dispatch Anuvier, Maeve (area **8**), and the wraith in area **46.** If the PCs or NPCs are willing to assist, she spares their lives until she takes control of Highwall.

Ogre zombies (2): INT non-; AL N; AC 6; MV 9; HD 6; hp 30 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 4d4; SD as zombie; SZ L (9′ tall); ML 20; XP 650; *MM*/373 (zombie, monster). These mindless creatures are turned as ghasts.

43. Sinister Sheets. Hovering over the door inside this room is a sheet phantom. The phantom resembles a pale white curtain comprised of thin, resilient fibers. On the first round, it envelopes its victim (attack roll necessary, but no damage inflicted). On subsequent rounds, the victim suffers 1d4 hp damage/round. Any damage inflicted upon the phantom at this time is also suffered by the victim. The creature can be pulled off the victim with a successful bend bars roll. However, the victim cannot wound the creature unless he has a sharp, small-sized weapon already in hand. If the sheet phantom kills its victim, the two merge to become a sheet ghoul.

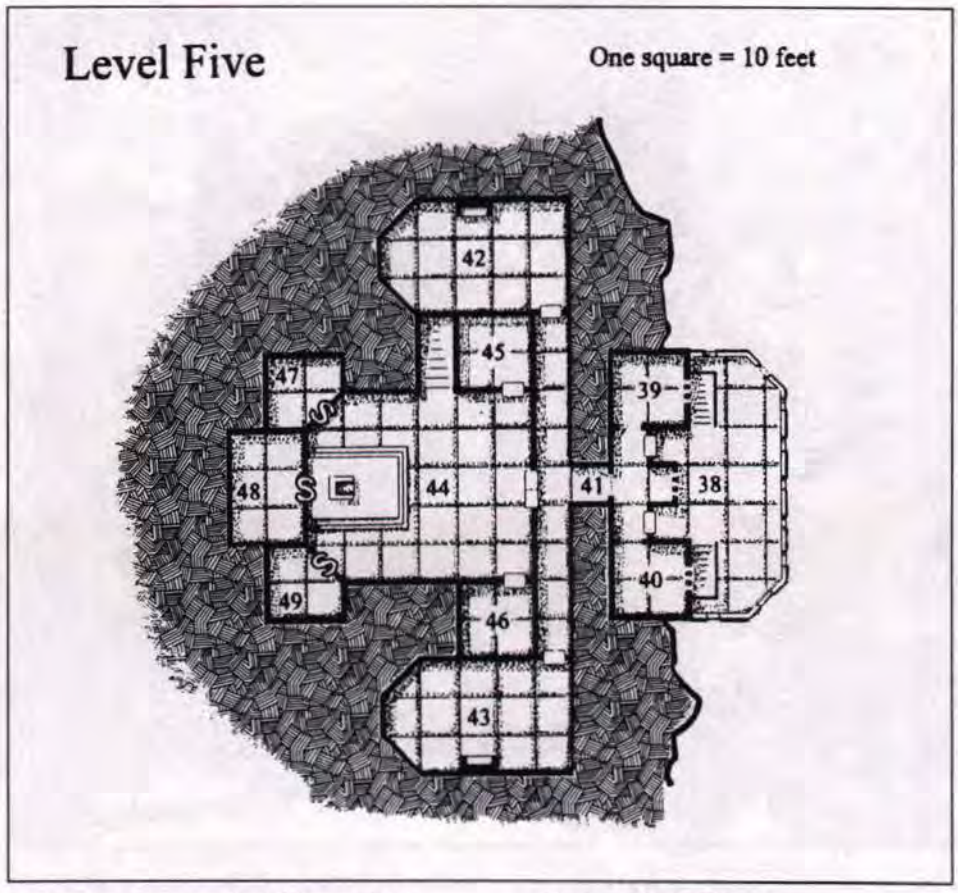
> The room is dark and dusty. A large, cobweb-covered bed stands against the east wall, across from the fireplace. In the north end of the room, facing south, stands a desk. Behind it, a rotting corpse lies slumped in a tall, ebony chair. Hanging on the northernmost wall behind the chair is a shield (depicting a flaming sword) crossed by two spears.

This room once belonged to the castellan—the highest-ranking officer of Highwall. The "cobwebs" on the bed are actually two more sheet phantoms, and PCs watching the cobwebs closely have a 5% chance per point of Intelligence of discerning them. The phantoms attack anyone approaching within 5′ of the bed (–5 to opponents' surprise rolls if the sheets are not detected).

The corpse slumped behind the desk is a normal zombie. It animates the instant someone touches the shield or spears on the north wall. The shield and spears are non-magical. The zombie's desk is locked (key in area **26**) and contains bottles of dried ink, brittle pieces of paper, and the castellan's seal (handle shaped like a golden lion; worth 75 gp). Under the seal is a scrap of paper with words scrawled on it. The words are written in Karamhul (dwarvish) and translate to: "To the left of the throne lies Brichlur." The message provides a cryptic clue to the resting place of *Brichlur,* a spear presumably crafted from bloodsilver. The spear was hidden centuries ago in area **49.**

Sheet phantoms (3): INT average; AL CE; AC 3; MV 6, fly 6 (C); HD 3; hp 15, 13, 10; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA suffocation; SD immune to sleep, charm and other mind-affecting attacks; turned as wraiths; SZ M (8′ × 11′); ML 13; XP 270; MC14.

Sheet ghoul: INT average; AL CE; AC 2; MV 9; HD 4+2; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA spit acid (10′ range; 1d8+1 hp damage; save vs. breath weapon for half damage); SD as sheet phantom; turned as spectre; SZ M; ML 14; XP 650; MC14.



44. Anuvier's Curse.

> This high, vaulted chamber is unfurnished save for a heavy wooden throne placed atop a rectangular dais of dark, polished stone. The throne is carved to resemble a rearing lion with its mouth frozen in a roar. Seated on the throne, veiled in shadows, is an undead soldier dressed in bloodied plate mail. His chilling gaze and sneer clearly indicate you are unwelcome.

The thing seated on the throne is a zombire—the evil remnants of Anuvier, the bold Anuirean general who led his army into the ambush at Mhelliviene. Now he must "live" forever with that disgrace. The Shadow World has preserved his rotting state so that, in many ways, he resembles the man he once was. His hatred of elves supercedes his disdain for life in general, and the sight of an elf drives him berserk. Otherwise, the zombire remains seated in the throne until someone dares attack him or step onto his platform. With a gargled shout, the zombire can call upon reinforcements from areas **45** and **46.** Anuvier can also use his armor's *fear*

ability to scare away his enemies. If reduced to half hit points, the zombire assumes *gaseous form* and waits for a better opportunity to strike.

The zombire is willing to speak with intruders, but after 1d4+4 rounds he tires of their company and orders his minions to attack. His voice is deep and ugly, and his jaw almost sinks to his chest when he speaks. He knows what bloodsilver is, and he thinks he has a genuine tighmaevril weapon in his treasure hoard, but he's unwilling to reveal where the weapon (or the other treasure) is hidden. The only thing Anuvier wants is life—he is tired of this undead state. He knows his wish is unattainable, however, and he despises every living person who stands before him. The cruel irony is that *Brichlur,* the spear he is guarding, has the ability to *raise dead.* Unfortunately, Anuvier has been dead too long to benefit from the spear's power.

Anuvier has absolute command over the mindless undead in Highwall. However, he is threatened by several skelters and zombires under his charge. Anuvier pits his servants against one another, hoping their petty rivalries will keep them distracted. However, the skelters Elamien and Jadrele (see areas **26** and **42**) are particular threats which Anuvier would like eliminated. The zombire Maeve (area **8**) has detached herself from the others, and Anuvier regards her as a nuisance more than anything. If the PCs agree to destroy his rivals, Anuvier promises to let the PCs choose a reward from treasure contained in the secret vaults. However, Anuvier is chaotic evil and will not honor this agreement.

The secret doors leading to the vaults (areas **47–49**) can be detected normally. All three doors are unlocked and easily pushed open. However, the doors have springed hinges and close automatically unless held or wedged open.

Anuvier (zombire): AC 2; hp 25; see page 18 for full statistics. Anuvier wears *Doomshell,* a suit of *plate mail of fear +1* (two *fear* charges remaining). The Shadow World has corrupted the armor so that anyone donning it suffers an alignment change to chaotic evil (no save). A *remove curse* spell restores alignment to normal, but only if the armor is removed first. Anuvier fights with his claws and carries no weapon.

45. Shades of Peril. The only furnishings in this unlit room are five wooden cots that have been pushed against the walls to make room for 14 skeletons, six zombies, and two shadows. The shadows have no control over the mindless undead; however, they are allied with the zombire Anuvier.

Shadows (2): INT low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 18, 13; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1; SA Strength drain; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and cold-based spells; SZ M; ML 16; XP 420; *MM*/312.

46. Servants of Doom. This chamber is similar to area **45,** except there are 12 skeletons, seven zombies, and one wraith present. The wraith is an agent sent by the sinister forces that govern the Shadow World. Its job is to ensure the loyalty and misery of the other intelligent undead creatures lurking in Highwall. If the PCs destroy the zombire and its minions, the wraith departs and lures other undead to the party's location, continuing to do so until the PCs or all the undead in the fortress (including itself) are destroyed.

Wraith: INT very ; AL LE; AC 4; MV 12, fly 24 (B); HD 5+3; hp 23; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA energy drain; SD silver or magical weapons needed to hit; immune to poison, paralysis, death magic and cold-based attacks; MR immune to *sleep, charm, fear,* and *hold* spells; SZ M; ML 15; XP 2,000; *MM*/365.

47. Emptiness. A layer of dust covers the floor of this otherwise empty vault.

48. Ancient Hoard. This dust-shrouded chamber contains three large wooden chests (5′ × 2′ × 2′), all placed against the northern wall. The chests were brought here centuries ago by dwarven renegades. (See "For the Dungeon Master" for details.) All three chests have circular iron rings bolted to their fronts and backs, and six 7′-long wooden poles can be seen leaning in the southeast corner. Sliding the poles through the iron rings enables the PCs to lift and transport the chests.

Guarding the chests is a helmed horror—an animated suit of plate armor

built by the dwarven renegades to guard their treasure. The horror stands in front of the chests, attacking anyone who enters the chamber and defending itself if necessary. The horror can see *invisible* creatures within 120′ and possesses *infravision* (120′ range). It heals lost hit points at the same rate as a resting human and is held upright through levitation.

Helmed horror: INT high; AL N; AC 2; MV 12, fly 12 (E); HD 4+8; hp 35; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 or by weapon (1d6+1 with hammer); SD healed by *magic missiles* (excess hit points are injuriously reflected back at the caster); immune to mind-affecting attacks; SZ M (6′ tall); ML 20; XP 2,000; *Monstrous Compendium Annual,* Volume 1; large warhammer (Dmg 1d6+1/1d8+1; speed factor 8).

If he is present, the magician Shaene Nagor casts his *detect magic* on the helmed horror and the chests. The horror radiates magic, as do the contents of chest #1. The wily magician steers others towards chests #2 and #3 while he investigates chest #1 for himself!

Chest #1 is unlocked and contains three shelves, or levels. The first shelf holds 600 sp (ancient dwarven mint). The second shelf holds 500 gp of similar mint. The third shelf holds 45 gems (17 × 10 gp, 13 × 50 gp, 10 × 100 gp, 4 × 500 gp and 1 × 1,000 gp), a *gem of brightness* (6 charges), and a *wand of negation* (3 charges; command word "zarawn").

Chest #2 is jammed shut and requires a bend bars roll at +10% to open. (A solid blow from a blunt weapon will unjam the chest automatically.) Piled inside are 8,000 cp and 4,500 sp. Hidden beneath a false bottom are 70 gold hammer-shaped ingots (worth 10 gp each), a bag containing 12 assorted pieces of dwarven-made jewelry (2 × 50 gp, 3 × 100 gp and 7 × 500 gp), 25 quartz rods (20 gp each) and a hollow axe handle (plugged) filled with 18 small diamonds (500 gp each).

Chest #3 is sealed shut with melted silver. The silver (worth 10 gp) can be pried away easily. Inside the chest are 30 gold bars (100 gp each), eight gold medallions shaped like crossed hammers (250 gp each), a golden headband studded with garnets and chips of chrysoprase (2,000 gp) and a golden hammer-shaped scepter inlaid with emeralds (total value 10,000 gp).

The total monetary value of all three chests (excluding the magical items in chest #1) is 36,820 gp. Four strong men are required to lift each chest, assuming none of its contents are removed. A regent capable of transporting this trove safely back to his domain can convert the hoard into gold bars for his treasury (minus anything taken by henchmen, hirelings and greedy NPCs). Recall that 1 GB is equivalent to 2,000 gp.

49. No Blood in Silver. Within this chamber lies the magical spear *Brichlur* (or "Bloodspear"). The weapon's shaft and tip are composed of a silvery metal which catches the light. The elven-made spear was brought to Highwall by a clan of dwarven renegades fleeing Thak Mor Kadan. See "For the Dungeon Master" for details.

The spear hovers upright in the middle of the chamber, held aloft by a *ring of levitation* incorporated into the weapon's shaft. This silver band cannot be removed from the spear, but the spear's holder may use the ring's power to *levitate* at will (as per the wizard's spell). The spear also has a *ring of water breathing* and a *ring of protection +1* molded into it, and the owner benefits from these magical items as well. *Brichlur* is a *spear +3.* By touch, the spear can also perform the following magic, cast at 15th level: *raise dead* (1/month), *cure serious wounds* (1/week) and *cure disease* (1/week).

No one in Taerlyn's band has the ability to discern true tighmaevril. Neither Taerlyn nor her henchmen have ever seen bloodsilver, although clearly the spear is exceptional. Eldred and Kylo are likewise unfamiliar with tighmaevril and automatically assume the spear is made of bloodsilver.

Although the spear is not composed of tighmaevril, it is a powerful weapon nonetheless. Yet despite its potent magical abilities, the weapon is of little interest to the Gorgon or his henchmen (see "The Sons of Sora" below). The Gorgon seeks only tighmaevril weapons, and the half-ogres Skorn and Murkblade will not trouble themselves over a spear made of something other than bloodsilver. Although they are initially duped by its striking similarity to other tighmaevril weapons (like those in their master's collection), the half-ogres' locate bloodsilver ability confirms the spear is not made of tighmaevril.

The half-ogres may not have any interest in *Brichlur* or its "limited" powers, but Taerlyn and Ruornad will cer-

tainly claim the weapon if given the chance. Both are proficient with the spear, and they are prepared to fight others for custody of *Brichlur.* However, they do not invite conflict with an obviously superior foe; if necessary, they bide their time and attempt to seize the weapon while the PCs are distracted. Parniel, Taerlyn's halfling henchman, may try to seize the spear and shift back to Cerilia, removing *Brichlur* from the Shadow World and hiding it until Taerlyn returns. Kylo the halfling also desires the spear, although he doesn't have the ability to take it from a well-armed party. If he learns that the spear is not composed of bloodsilver, Kylo nevertheless considers it a fine prize; however, he is quickly distracted by the gems in area **48,** which are also valuable and much easier to carry!

Assuming the spear isn't immediately regarded as a fake, Delvyn the dwarf tries to detain the party until Skorn and Murkblade arrive. Delvyn seizes Kylo, holding his short sword to the halfling's throat. (For plot purposes, the DM may consider this an automatic success. Otherwise, a normal attack roll is required.) Delvyn kills time negotiating for the release of the hostage, making outrageous demands while waiting for the half-ogres to arrive.

The Sons of Sora

Skorn and Murkblade are members of a secret infantry unit quietly being assembled by the Gorgon. Over the last 200 years, the evil awnshegh has brought human females captives into the Gorgon's Crown and bred them with ogres who live in the mountains. The Gorgon intends to create a company of half-ogres endowed with the size and brutality of their fathers and the intelligence and wisdom of their human mothers. Although this company is decades away from coalescing, the half-ogres bred so far have proven both loyal and effective. Skorn and Murkblade are unusually powerful specimens. Their mother, Sora, was a scion of Azrai. Sora died during childbirth, but her twin sons survived and inherited the evil deity's divine essence. Their sole purpose is to retrieve tighmaevril weapons for the Gorgon's collection. The journey to Highwall is their first excursion beyond the confines of the Gorgon's Crown. It is also their last, should they fail to retrieve what they set out for.

As the PCs explore the fortress, Skorn and Murkblade arrive at Highwall and prepare to enter the Shadow World. The half-ogres need not arrive during the night, as both are equipped with magical *shadowsticks.* These black rods were created by the Gorgon's agents and are infused with negative energy. When the shadowsticks are brought to the ruins (area **1**), the portal into the Shadow World opens for 1d3 rounds (regardless of the time of day), allowing the half-ogres to enter. The rods can be used only once, dissolving into nothingness once their power is invoked.

Before entering the Shadow World, Skorn and Murkblade search the ruins for stray party members, guards, or tethered mounts. They slay anyone they encounter and scare away all of the party's horses. Once in the Shadow World, the half-ogres begin their tireless search for the tighmaevril weapon, guided by their *locate bloodsilver* ability. (Since the tighmaevril weapon doesn't really exist, the half-ogres become increasingly discouraged by their inability to track it down.) As scions of Azrai, both half-ogres have the ability to assume *shadow form.* Similar to the wizard's *wraithform* spell, this blood ability enables them to circumvent Highwall's undead guardians. It also makes the half-ogres impervious to non-magical weapons. However, they can attack only in corporeal form.

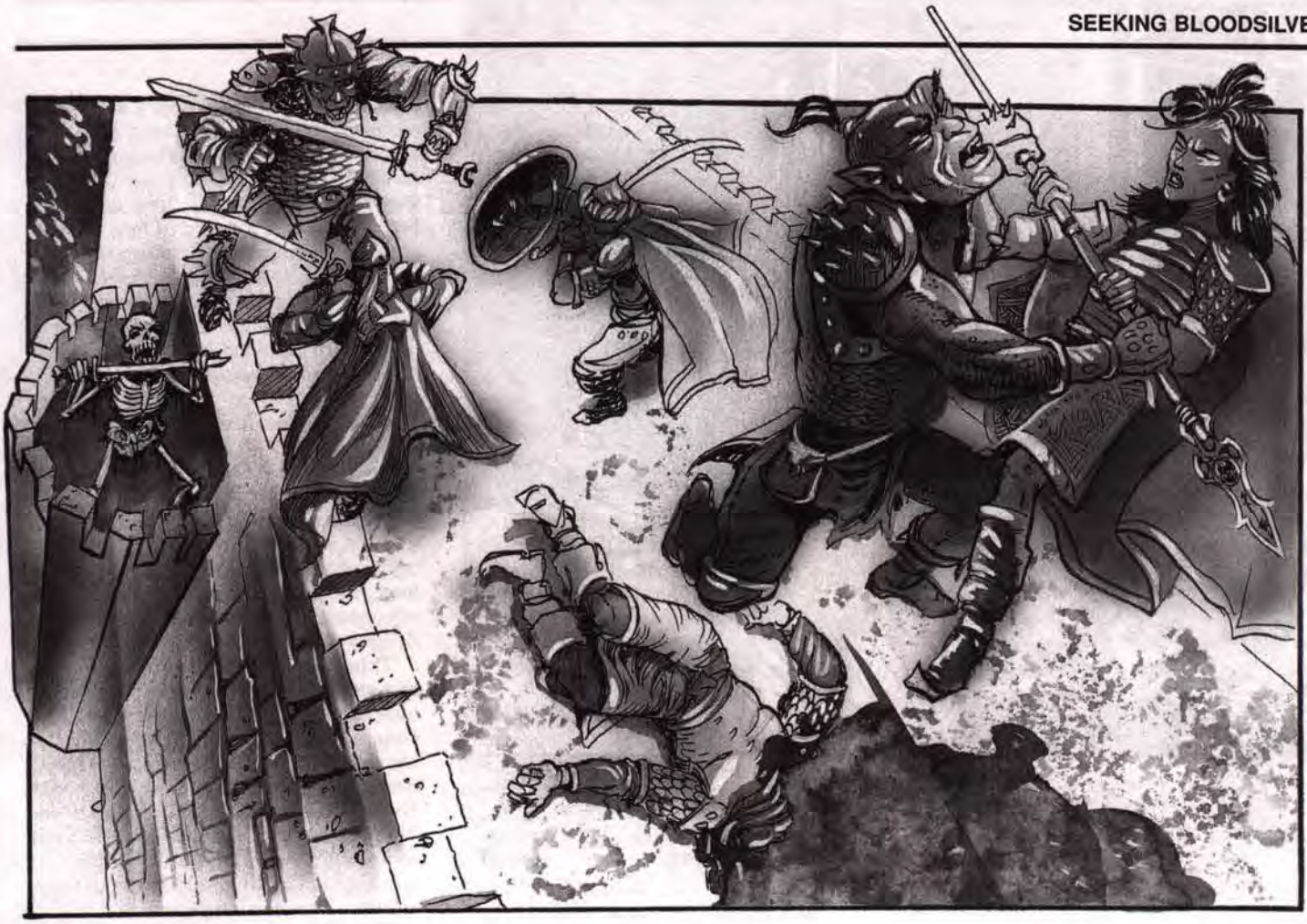
The DM should time the climactic encounter with the half-ogres so that it occurs in the throneroom (area **44**) or atop the great wall (area **31**) after the PCs have had a chance to explore the secret vaults (areas **47–49**) and locate the magical spear, *Brichlur.* The half-ogres try to outflank the party before assuming their corporeal forms. They are far from congenial, demanding outright that the PCs surrender the tighmaevril weapon or "Face the pain!"

If the PCs show them the spear, the half-ogres sniff the air then curl their lips in anger and disgust. Once they realize that the spear is "fake" (and that there are no other tighmaevril weapons in the vicinity), the half-ogres become furious and attack the party in frustration. Skorn wields *Skullcutter,* a monstrous battle axe engraved with death runes and tipped with a vicious black spike. Murkblade wields a huge two-handed sword of blackened steel named *Bloodfang.* Both weapons are speed factor 10 and non-magical.

Skorn and Murkblade are among the Gorgon's more powerful henchmen, and a lone party of low-level adventurers will be hard-pressed to defeat them. The pair can be outsmarted, however. For instance, the PCs might claim that the spear is indeed made of bloodsilver, but that ancient magic prevents the half-ogres from sensing it. If the half-ogres buy into this and return with the "bloodsilver" spear in hand, the Gorgon kills them for their idiocy! The half-ogres are entitled to an Intelligence check vs. any ploy devised by the PCs, though the DM may apply modifiers to this roll. Delvyn the dwarf tries to thwart any attempt to deceive the half-ogres. He also sides with the half-ogres if the battle tilts in their favor. Neither Skorn nor Murkblade hold the dwarf in much regard and attack Delvyn if he gets in the way.

With the help of Taerlyn, Eldred, and their combined NPC retinues, the PCs might defeat or repel the half-ogres. Under no circumstances does the proud Taerlyn ally herself with emissaries of the Gorgon. However, if Aderack and his brigands are present, they jump to the half-ogres' side rather than face the Gorgon's wrath. If either half-ogre dies or both are reduced to half hit points, they assume *shadow form* and retreat. Likewise, if the PCs make themselves elusive targets, the half-ogres eventually tire of chasing them and return to Cerilia. Depending on their mood and the amount of damage they've sustained, the half-ogres leave the Shadow World and either wait in ambush outside the ruins or return to the Gorgon to face the consequences of their failure.

The DM can make the half-ogres even more threatening to the PCs and their well-armed henchmen by adding a small army of goblins and dwarves to their roster. These humanoids accompany the half-ogres to Highwall and remain in the ruins until the brothers return from the Shadow World. The goblins and dwarves rout Taerlyn's mercenaries and attack anyone who returns from the Shadow World (see "Leaving the Shadow World"). The first wave consists of 30 goblins (light infantry). The second wave consists of the 12 dwarven shock troops and the remaining 15 goblins (archers). Skorn and Murkblade regard these troops as expendable, using them to cover their escape if necessary.



Skorn and **Murkblade** (blooded half-ogre fighters): AL LE; AC 2; MV 9; F8; hp 81, 77; THAC0 13 (10 with strength); #AT 3/2 (weapon) or 1 (fist); Dmg by weapon type +6 (Strength) or 1d6+6 (spiked fist); S 18/00 (+3/+6), D 10, C 18, I 9, W 10, Ch 4; SZ L (8′ tall); ML 16; XP 3,000; spiked plate armor (+4 to saves vs. acid-based attacks), spiked gauntlets and helmet, *shadow-stick* (see above; good-aligned creatures touching rod suffer 1d8 hp cold damage), *Skullcutter* (two-handed battle axe; Dmg 1d10+6/2d8+6) or *Blood-fang* (two-handed sword; Dmg 1d10+6/3d6+6). The half-ogres' bloodline (minor, strength: 29) derives from Azrai.

Blood abilities: *shadow form* (see BIRTHRIGHT *Rulebook,* page 28, for details), *locate bloodsilver* (range 120 yards; see "New Blood Abilities" sidebar).

Mur-Kiladan dwarves (12): INT very; AL NE; AC 4 (3 with weapon specialization); MV 9; F2; hp 16 each; THAC0 18; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon +1 (strength); S 17 (+1/+1); SZ M; ML 12; XP 65; *MM*/191; splint mail, shield, battle axe, footman's pick.

Markaz goblins (30 infantry, 15 archers): INT average; AL LE; AC 5 (6 without shield); MV 6; HD 1–1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (weapon); SZ S (4′ tall); ML 10 (13 if Skorn and/or Murkblade is present); XP 15 (35 for archers); *MM*/163; hide armor, short sword, short bow with 2d6 flight arrows (archers only), wooden shield.

Leaving the Shadow World

Once Skorn and Murkblade are defeated or driven away, the PCs are free to return to Cerilia. To leave the Shadow World, non-halflings must return to the point of their arrival (area **1**). Those with the *shadow walk* ability (and anyone in direct contact with them) may return to Cerilia from anywhere inside the fortress; those without the *shadow walk* ability must return to area **1.**

The journey back is less eventful, although Vrachspir may still be lurking at the mouth of Mhelliviene, waiting to attack the PCs as they head for the woods (assuming the wyvern wasn't slain or driven off by the half-ogres). If Taerlyn is alive, she returns to her father's tower in Mhoried and informs him of her success or failure. Regien is not discouraged when he learns that the rumors of tighmaevril were false, nor does he harbor resentment toward the PCs for opposing his daughter. However, if the PCs harmed Taerlyn, Regien learns of this (via his *crystal ball*) and make arrangements to have the PCs and their accomplices arrested. He sends his loyal lieutenant, Captain Jael, to intercept the PCs before they leave Mhoried's borders. If the PCs manage to flee Mhoried, Regien pursues action with the Mhor (only in the event Taerlyn was brutalized or killed).

Captain Llewellyn Jael (unblooded Anuirean fighter): AL CG; AC 3; MV 12; F5; hp 41; THAC0 16 (base); #AT 3/2 or 1; Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength), +2 (specialization); S 17 (+1/+1), D 12, C 13, I 10, W 12, Ch 15; ML 16; plate mail, footman's mace (specialized), short sword.

Continued on page 69

THE MOTHER'S CURSE

BY JOHN GUZZETTA

Wednesday's child...

Artwork by David Day

John is a senior at Cornell University majoring in Government and English. He writes: "It's too bad I couldn't claim credit-hours for this adventure, since it was so hard finding the time to write it between classes, work, and fun. Thanks goes out to my wife, Christine, for allowing me to drag her up to frigid Ithaca, New York, and for putting up with my all-nighters at the computer lab. Thanks also to Gary Lai for his encouragement, at work and elsewhere."

"The Mother's Curse" is an AD&D® adventure for 3–5 PCs of levels 3–5 (about 16 total levels). The party should consist of good-aligned PCs, as the central goal is to aid a helpless family without monetary compensation. The party should be well-balanced, with at least one mage and one priest. This adventure involves problem solving and detective work on the part of the PCs.

This adventure is adaptable to any campaign and may be especially suitable for the RAVENLOFT® setting or, by changing some of the monstrous foes to humans and eliminating some magical items, the historical setting of *A Mighty Fortress* (HR4). DMs with access to the *Wilderness Survival Guide* might wish to peruse the sections on swamps, quicksand, fighting in water, and the effects of water on equipment.

The DM may wish to introduce the PCs to the town with very little equipment—just some money, a few weapons, and spell components. That way, the PCs will want to visit several shops in town to gather equipment, and in the process will be encouraged to meet people from whom they can gather important information.

Players Introduction

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> For the past few weeks you have been serving as guards for a merchant ship. The season is late fall, and though there is no snow yet, the days are short and chilly.
>
> This morning you disembarked at the tiny town of Monetenapoleone, which is situated on the mountainous edge of a deep inlet off the Zabaglione Sea. Your ship docked only long enough to drop off passengers and a few crates, (which were quickly taken by dock hands to a warehouse) and

has already pushed back out to sea.

Judging from a first glance, the town proper consists of a collection of ramshackle businesses. The population looks poor—mostly subsistence fishermen and farmers. The atmosphere seems uneasy, as if this desolate village hemmed in by dark, forested mountains hides some secrets.

Before the ship left, the captain suggested that you stop in the Three Anchors Inn for hot food, drink, and rooms. It stands to your right just a few yards off the wharf.

Allow the PCs to explore the town of Monetenapoleone if they wish. Eventually they should stop at the Three Anchors Inn.

When the PCs enter, the taproom is deserted. The owner, Racconigi, and his daughter, Bellina, come from upstairs to help the PCs. They serve drinks promptly, though food takes longer to arrive. The hosts apologize and ask the PCs to sit and enjoy the drinks while they prepare the meal and rooms. There is no fire in the fireplace.

They are initially cautious of the PCs, as they are with all strangers, but mellow quickly as long as the PCs seem nice. They are very friendly, but seem downcast and preoccupied. There are no other customers.

While the PCs are waiting, Racconigi sends Bellina upstairs to prepare the room and asks the PCs if he might ask a favor, offering a free round of drinks if they will only listen. If the PCs agree, he pours new drinks for all but himself and begins gravely:

I am your humble servant, Racconigi. I'm sorry to bother you when you have just arrived, but you look like you could help out a poor soul who is afflicted beyond his strength. You are new to Monetenapoleone, but if you stay a few days I think you will begin to perceive that there is a curse on this town. It can always be felt—nervousness between neighbors, fear of the night, strange rumors—but cannot be defined except that it is unquestionably evil.

If the PCs are willing to help and want to know more, Racconigi leads them upstairs to where his daughter, Nora, is passed out in bed with a high fever. She is obviously at an advanced stage of pregnancy. Racconigi's wife, Mestre, sits by her bed and occasionally pats her head with a wet cloth. Bellina, finished with the rooms, stands by the door biting her nails.

The innkeeper continues:

This is my wife Mestre and my poor daughter Nora. Nora has been bedridden with fever for almost three weeks, and lapses between unconsciousness and delirium. The local clerics are unable to do anything, and they shun us, for they fear the curse on Nora.

Several days ago a traveling healer who called himself Vittorio visited our town—he had some business with the same priests that turned us away—and we enlisted his aid. He made curious examinations and used strange equipment, but he seemed to be getting to the bottom of whatever is curses Nora. Suddenly, he made some discovery. He said the sickness was indeed part of the evil that besets Monetenapoleone and that it would have to be dealt with quickly, though he refused to be specific for fear that he would frighten us and her. He began working for free.

Two days ago he said he had to go back to his room at the monastery for a while, but he never returned. I know that my daughter is due to give birth in only a few days and that something terrible will happen when she does, but I am helpless to stop it without Vittorio the healer or a worthy group such as yourselves.

I beg you. I am a poor man, but I will give anything if you will save my daughter from this curse.

Racconigi can collect some debts from others in town and put together a total of 150 gp plus an heirloom chest worth 50 gp to give the PCs, though he hopes they are moved and will help him for free. If the PCs help, Racconigi provides free rooms and food and whatever mundane items he can scavenge for their use during the adventure.

Nora's Curse

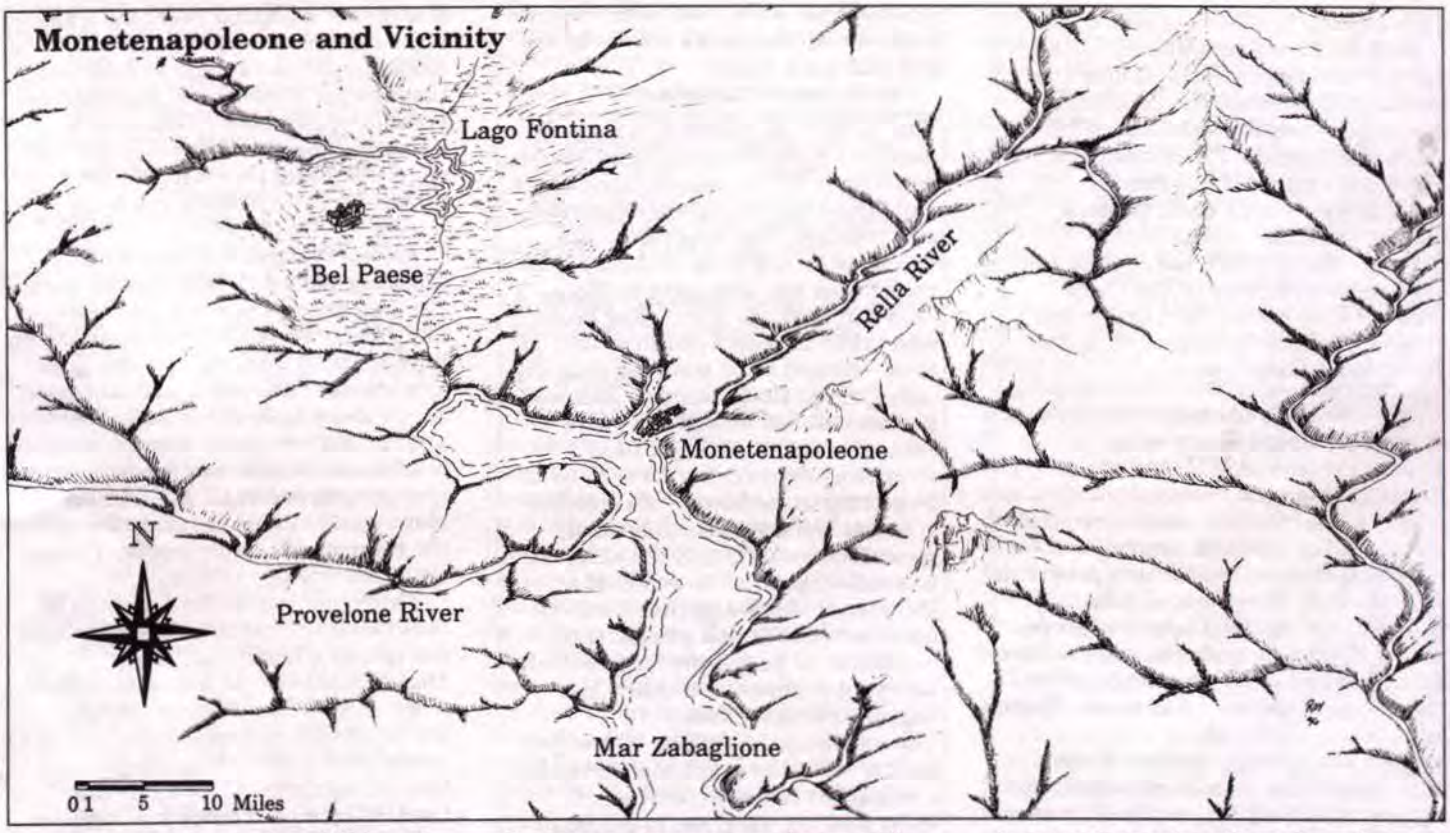
To understand the "curse" that afflicts Nora, one must know the history of Monetenapoleone. Seventy-five years ago, the town was actually located between the western arm of the inlet and Fontina Lake some 20 miles northwest of its current position (see the map on page 34). It was a much bigger town supporting a much bigger population. Merchant ships served it frequently, and a branch of a popular over-land trade route connected from the north. Monetenapoleone's claim to fame was the Abbey of Pietrasanta, a magnificent building constructed by clerics of a minor healing order. People in the town often worshiped there on holidays and frequently brought their sick to be healed.

Things changed suddenly when a greenhag named Gornalunga selected the area to serve her evil ambitions. She quietly moved into the surrounding hills. Without warning, her ogre minions attacked the abbey and drove the clerics away. Before the shocked people and the surviving clerics could muster a retaliation, Gornalunga flooded a large area around Fontina Lake, turning many square miles including the abbey, the town, and the only overland escape route into a soggy swamp.

Those that could afford passage by boat fled immediately. Those who could not rebuilt a much smaller Monetenapoleone on the eastern shore of the inlet, where it stands today. A few of the clerics chose to stay and soon constructed a small monastery. Unfortunately the clerics, like the townsfolk, became meek and reclusive.

In the seven decades since, Gornalunga has completely dominated the small, isolated area. From her stronghold deep within the swamp, which the locals call the Bel Paese, she uses the remaining residents of Monetenapoleone for her terrible schemes. She maintains a few spies within the town to monitor events and to insure that the few people remaining are unable to resist or organize. She feels secure in this evil haven she has created, and she knows what comes and goes from one end to another.

Gornalunga has spent all this time and energy for a reason. Her purpose manifests itself as a complicated relationship with the population of Monetenapoleone and a night hag of Hades named Trieste. Once every 15 years or so, Gornalunga selects a human female and waits until she has just conceived. Using her *change self* ability, Gornalunga disguises herself as a beautiful young woman and seduces the husband of the selected host. Now pregnant herself, she kills and eats the husband. Within a week, Gornalunga secretly visits the female while she sleeps and magically switches the two unborn babies (see hags, *MM*/181). The



human now carries the hag child, and the hag now carries the human child. This is what has happened to Nora and her missing (dead) husband Moliterno.

The last few months of pregnancy for the human mother are torment, because of the large, evil thing growing inside her. The two mothers are linked, so that they go into labor at the same time.

When the children are finally brought to term, the hag child—moderately intelligent and self-sustaining from birth—kills its human mother and escapes into the surrounding wilderness, eventually making its own way in the world. The human child is transformed during the final seconds in the hag's womb and is born a larva, a living item of exchange valuable to the night hags (see the entries on larvae and night hags in *MC5*). The birth of the larva does not harm the hag.

A larva produced in this manner is worth 100 times that of normal larvae, and therefore is greatly prized by the night hags. Night hags and earthly hags often bargain together to produce these sentient tokens, as have Gornalunga and Trieste.

The arrangement is mutually beneficial for the two hags—Trieste gives Gornalunga treasures and powers in return for enhanced larvae; however, it is a terrible blight on Monetenapoleone.

Vittorio had discovered the nature of the cursed birth and was preparing to attack the hag, but Gornalunga's spy Randazzo found him out and Gornalunga acted quickly to capture Vittorio. He is currently being held in Gornalunga's lair.

There have been four or five such cursed births in Monetenapoleone in the past seven decades, since Gornalunga took over. The residents know that the abbey was overrun by large humanoid monsters 70 years ago, but nothing about Gornalunga or her plans. These cursed births, coupled with the residents' uneasiness, poverty, and overall fear of the mysterious evil that blankets the town, oppresses them beyond their capacity. Though the residents are not content with their lot, they submit to their miserable hardship because they do not know how to overcome it, or for that matter to discover exactly what it is. When any misfortune befalls a neighbor—from a mild sickness or poor harvest to the dreaded cursed birth— the other townsfolk tend to turn their backs, distancing themselves from the evil as much as possible. The people of Monetenapoleone are a poor, distrustful, nervous, and superstitious group, and—until the PCs arrived—a group with no hope of relief.

The PCs are charged to learn the true nature of the evil that torments the residents of Monetenapoleone, discovering clues to help piece together Vittorio's findings and his current whereabouts, and then acting to reverse Nora's cursed birth and rid the land of the evil hag. The PCs can find these clues by exploring Monetenapoleone and talking to its diverse residents.

Monetenapoleone

Keep track of the days that pass. Nora will go into labor at exactly 8:00 P.M. on the eighth day the PCs are in the area. She will give birth at midnight that evening.

As the DM, you may wish to detail the shops in town with maps and flesh out their contents, but all the information necessary to play this adventure is included in the text.

Monetenapoleone consists of 10 homes—out of which each family

operates a small business—and the monastery and wharf. The economy of the town is very simple. Transactions are carried out by trade or coin. The people make everything they can by themselves, purchasing goods from the businesses only when necessary. Accordingly, the businesses provide only those goods that cannot be manufactured by the families.

Fish is the staple food of the town, and it sells cheaply out of the two fish stands. Each family also tends a small subsistence farm and hunts game to complete their diets.

All the people are wary of strangers. They are distrustful of newcomers at first, but they soften if the PCs take the initiative and seem good-natured. The townsfolk are likely to shun PCs who look strange, wear armor, carry weapons, or demonstrate flamboyant magic. The people are especially afraid to associate with bold, loud, or crusading PCs, since the confident and loud are usually the first to disappear. The PCs must convince individual townsfolk first that they do not attract too much unhealthy attention, second that they are trustworthy and seek to aid the community, and third that giving them some information or associating with them does not jeopardize their families in any way. In any case, the PCs must ask direct questions; the people do not volunteer information.

When role-playing encounters with the townsfolk, keep in mind that the attitude of the people is that the mysterious evils of the land are best left unspoken, and that those who talk of it too much sooner or later are cursed. Also keep in mind that Gornalunga has done her best to keep the people ignorant of her presence. Except for the clerics in the monastery, the townsfolk do not know any of the information provided in "Nora's Curse."

Though specific conversations and relationships between the PCs and the townsfolk should arise in the course of the game, information that a particular NPC carries that will be especially useful to the PCs is mentioned in the text.

The PCs should be cautious with whom they speak, for Gornalunga has spies in the town: Randazzo, Dalmazzo, and Tolmezzo (see area **C**). If the PCs make a public scene, are too showy, or say too much in the presence of any of the spies, they will be suspected, revealed to the hag, and marked for death (see "The Ambush"). If the PCs make the mistake of declaring flat out to anyone but Racconigi or the clerics at the monastery that they plan to end the problems of Monetenapoleone and Racconigi's family, rumors travel and the spies catch wind of it even if the PCs never actually meet them.

The townsfolk do not like Randazzo, Dalmazzo, and Tolmezzo because they seem strange. Though they talk little, they are nosy and always seem to show up where secrets are being discussed. The townsfolk do not talk to the PCs while any of the three are present, and they appear to be especially uncomfortable. On the other hand, the townsfolk are always polite with them, because they have an effective monopoly over imports, and so far they have not attempted to exploit it.

Unless otherwise specified, all NPC townsfolk share the following statistics: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon. Townsfolk fight only when necessary to defend themselves or their families.

A. Wharf. This boxed text assumes the PCs arrive at the wharf when the fishing vessels are out. Alter the text if the PCs arrive while the vessels are docked:

> The wharf consists of a rocky beach and two rickety wooden docks. Spare nets and lines for drying fish dot the shore around the docks. Waves gently roll in, while tiny hermit crabs scuttle over the beach.

Monetenapoleone's two small fishing boats are docked here each evening but are floating in the inlet from before sunup until late afternoon. After 5:00 P.M., the PCs can find the four fishermen on shore bringing in a catch or mending their nets. All of the fishermen sleep on their boats, except on stormy nights when they stay in their parents' houses.

Zoldo (hp 6, knife) operates one fishing vessel with his new partner, his young brother **Spulico** (hp 6, knife). They are Ormea's sons, and they deliver their catch to him to be sold. Spulico is just barely old enough to start helping out on the fishing boat, but he was forced to by Moliterno's disappearance.

Nora's missing husband Moliterno was Zoldo's old partner and close friend. Just a few days before he disappeared, Moliterno talked about seeing a mysterious and beautiful woman at the edge of the woods. Against Zoldo's council he decided to return there and try to find her again one night before going home to his wife. Zoldo has kept the knowledge entirely to himself because he is afraid that, if the family found out about Moliterno's attempted adultery, it would hurt them too much. He speculates that the woman and Moliterno's disappearance are related, but he cannot conceive of how. Zoldo will not discuss this around his younger brother.

The woman was, of course, Gornalunga in her changed form, baiting Moliterno. Moliterno also talked about the woman to Racalmito, the lead cleric at the monastery.

The fishermen from the other boat, **Pisciotto** (hp 5, knife) and **Flosco** (hp 5, knife) are also brothers. They are Fuscaldo's sons, and they bring their catch to him to be sold. They have no worthwhile information and constantly try to talk about big fishes that got away. They are often found drinking too much at Three Anchors in the evenings.

No merchant ships are expected to dock for a week or more. Shipments are indeed rare, because Monetenapoleone is too poor to import much, and produces no worthwhile exports.

B. The Three Anchors Inn.

> The building is one of the larger and better maintained buildings in the area. Three large rusty anchors are displayed on the turf in front. A sign post next to them declares that this is the Three Anchors Inn, yet the shutters and doors are closed.

On the bottom floor is the taproom and kitchen. The family lives in the rooms on the top floor. The front door opens to the taproom, and the back door opens to the kitchen. If the PCs stay at the inn, they are given extra rooms on the top floor.

The inn does most of its business in spurts, especially about twice a month when a merchant ship docks and the sailors come ashore. During off times, **Racconigi** (hp 6, club) and his family don't bother working in the kitchen—they work the small farm out back that provides most of their meals. Of course, even in the slowest times the inn stays open for a few hours in the evenings, and the people of the town occasionally stop in for a drink and to catch up on news. Evenings in the taproom are

never boisterous—but are the closest thing to warmth and festivity in Monetenapoleone.

The PCs can find several of the male townsfolk at the inn each evening. On the other hand, the taproom is a very bad place to try to learn information, because at least one of Gornalunga's spies, Randazzo, Dalmazzo, or Tolmezzo, is always there in the evenings. One of them is sure to sit close and attempt to overhear the PCs discussing anything with the townsfolk. If any of the townsfolk become aware that any of those three are nearby while they speak about the evil in Monetenapoleone, they uncomfortably change the subject.

Racconigi and his wife **Mestre** (hp 5) have two daughters, **Nora** (hp 1 currently) and **Bellina** (hp 4). Nora was married to Moliterno before he failed to return home from fishing one night shortly after she became pregnant. He is presumed dead.

None of the family talks about Moliterno, for they feel it is taboo to speak of the dead. Racconigi explains that Moliterno was a good man, working hard as a fisherman with Ormea's son to support Nora.

Racconigi knows that the healer Vittorio was staying at the monastery (see area **L**). Vittorio would not let the family watch him work on Nora, because of his intimidating equipment. Racconigi was nervous about Vittorio at first, especially after glimpsing some of his equipment, but Racconigi put hope in his abilities after Vittorio seemed to make an important discovery. Vittorio refused to discuss the discovery, however.

Vittorio had discovered that Nora was carrying a hag's child and had almost succeeded tracking her own baby down before he was kidnapped.

Racconigi dislikes Randazzo and his two assistants, and goes to the warehouse only when he needs to collect a shipment of ale for his inn. When they come in for a drink, Racconigi silently but politely helps them.

C. Warehouse.

This is the warehouse where your ship's goods were taken. It is a one-story building, not much bigger than a normal house. Sturdy gates that face the beach stand closed. There is a smaller door on the eastern side, also closed.

The warehouse is the general distribution center of all the goods that come in to Monetenapoleone by ship. It consists of a large storage area, three small bedrooms, and a kitchen in back. Randazzo, the owner, and his helpers, Dalmazzo and Tolmezzo, unload vessels when shipments come in, keep the docks in working repair, place orders with the few merchant companies that bother to stop, and help fix ships when necessary. They also grow some food in a plot behind the warehouse. When not working, they can often be found snooping about the town or making innocuous visits to residents' businesses.

At any given time, the warehouse contains extra equipment that ships might need for repair or restocking, such as ropes, sails, burlap sacks, empty barrels, tar, and lumber. Some of the ship-repair equipment they have might be adaptable to the PCs as adventuring equipment. Goods are rarely stored here longer than a day or two, for the townsfolk come and pick up the things that they ordered as soon as the ships come in. Randazzo tacks a little to the top of each good he and his assistants handle to provide a living.

The three NPCs at the warehouse are spies for Gornalunga. Dalmazzo and Tolmezzo are *polymorphed* ogres that Gornalunga provided Randazzo in order to help him and to keep him in line.

Randazzo: AL CN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; dagger, *hag eye, ring of the swamp.*

Randazzo wears the *hag eye* set into a plain iron medallion around his neck over his shirt. It allows Gornalunga to see anything the *eye* is pointed at when she concentrates. Destroying the *eye* inflicts 1d10 hp damage upon Gornalunga and blinds her for 24 hours. The *ring of the swamp* allows the wearer to move through swampland at normal movement rate, to be unaffected by quicksand, and once per month to speak a command word to change a 15′ × 15′ patch of land into quicksand. The ring is covered with evil symbols so that no PC of good alignment will wear it. The PCs should earn 300 XP if they destroy the ring.

Randazzo is under terrible pressure from Gornalunga to be a spy or die a horrible death. Since he never liked the other people in Monetenapoleone, his conscience is not bothered by betraying them. In fact, he enjoys the privileges

he receives now and then from being Gornalunga's spy, though he lives his life in constant fear of her threats. Randazzo has never seen Gornalunga in her true form. She always appears to him in person as an especially ugly and powerful male ogre.

Dalmazzo and **Tolmezzo**: AL CE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 4+1 *(polymorphed* ogres); hp 25 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +2; ML 11; XP 175; club. See area **20** for statistics if the *polymorph* is somehow dispelled. Both ogres know the common tongue well enough to get by, but their speech is broken and guttural. They pose as sailors who were tired of life at sea and disembarked to make a regular living on land. They try to keep their disgust of humanity hidden, though if taunted or attacked, they promptly forget their orders to act like normal townsfolk and fly into a rage.

Occasionally, Gornalunga makes Randazzo order some weapons from Pamparato the blacksmith so that she may arm her undead minions. Randazzo tells Pamparato that merchants love his good workmanship and that he exports the swords. Gornalunga pays Randazzo gold for the swords.

The people of the town tolerate Randazzo and his assistants because they provide a valuable service, but they are visibly uncomfortable in their presence. When any of the three pop into a store, they are helped politely but in silence in hopes that they vacate the premises quickly. People are not necessarily afraid of them (they wouldn't know why they should be), just superstitiously uneasy.

The three spies monitor the PCs' comings and goings directly and indirectly. They rely mostly on what they overhear from other residents, or on what they can pry out of the PCs themselves. They are not thieves, and do not attempt to trail the PCs or sneak into their rooms. One of the three will always be at Three Anchors in the evenings. If the PCs stop in the warehouse to ask questions or purchase equipment, Randazzo asks questions about what the PCs are up to, or why they need the equipment, attempting to pry into the PCs plans and abilities.

There are only a couple of things in the warehouse that would incriminate any of the three besides the magical items on Randazzo's person. Dalmazzo and Tolmezzo both enjoy raw meat, scraps of which they have left in their rooms until they have begun to stink. In a book in his bedroom, Randazzo keeps detailed records of all the orders, deliveries, pick-ups, and payments he handles. Nowhere in the book is there any record of the swords and other weapons that Randazzo ordered from Pamparato the blacksmith. Also, in his room in a locked chest under his bed, Randazzo keeps over 300 gp hidden, which is much more than any resident could dream of having in a lifetime.

If the PCs discover the spies and manage to capture and *charm* them (the spies do not betray their master otherwise), Randazzo complains about being bullied by the great ogre and says that he is to keep the ogre informed of any visitors or strange events in the town in return for treasures. He knows that the "ogre" can see through the medallion. He knows that Dalmazzo and Talmezzo were sent by the ogre, but not that they are actually ogres.

Talmezzo has seen Gornalunga's true form and, if *charmed*, describes her as "the ugly old lady" but not as a "hag." He does not know about Gornalunga's baby-switching. Both Dalmazzo and Talmezzo hate their assignment but are too afraid of Gornalunga to resist. They can also give the PCs hints about the swamp and its creatures They believe the hag lives in the ruined abbey, though they have never seen it nor are they aware of the tunnels underneath.

The three cooperate only when around other residents to maintain their deception. In reality, Dalmazzo and Tolmezzo scorn Randazzo and go out of their way to make life difficult and fearful for him.

D. Ormea's Fish Stand.

> This small two-story building is one of two fish stands in town. The building is so old that it leans to one side. A man sits behind an outdoor counter waving flies off the fish before him. A sign hangs from a post above the counter which reads "Ormea's."

A door behind the building provides the only access to the inside. There is a kitchen and living area on the bottom floor. The family lives on the top floor.

Ormea (hp 5, knife) runs the stand. His sons Zoldo and Spulico (see area **A**) fish every day and bring their catch to be sold here. Ormea and his wife **Porina** (hp 3, knife) split their time between operating the store and working the family's small farm. Ormea's fish stand is the only place in town to purchase iron rations (preserved fish).

Ormea can tell the PCs they can find his sons in the afternoons at the wharf. He has no further information, although he is pleasant to talk to.

E. Fuscaldo's General Store.

> This building is the larger of the two fish stands. The front door stands open, and inside you can see shelves holding a selection of merchandise. The smell of day old fish wafts out the door. A woman picks gourds from a small plot behind the building.

This building is slightly larger than Ormea's fish stand. The storefront and kitchen are downstairs, and the bedrooms and living space are upstairs.

Fuscaldo (hp 7, knife) runs this business. His sons Pisciotto and Flosco (see area **A**) fish every day and bring their catch to be sold here. Out of the same building, Fuscaldo operates a small general store—a few shelves and hooks carrying the most basic small items. Only items that may not be manufactured by the townsfolk themselves can be found. Pottery, glass, candles, tinderboxes, and the like can be purchased here at standard prices. There is a 25% chance of finding an item listed in the *PHB* worth 3 gp or less, and almost no chance of finding more expensive items. There are no weapons or armor. Fuscaldo's wife **Marina** (hp 3, knife) splits her time between working the family's small farm and weaving baskets to sell in the general store. Her baskets are quite popular in town.

The PCs can certainly find a few items useful for adventuring here. No one in the family has any specific information for the PCs.

F. Tailor and Shoemaker.

> This appears to be nothing but a small house, though a sign tacked to the porch reads, "Tailor and Shoemaker." The front door is shut.

This is a small one-story building lacking any storefront. The family runs their business right out of their home.

Mama Nocera (hp 6) makes clothes from bolts of fabric she orders from Randazzo. She is a plump woman who gossips about any resident in Monetenapoleone, but she has no solid information. Her husband, **Dobbiaco** (hp 4), makes boots from leather he orders from Randazzo, or from the hides of slaughtered animals in town. They and their daughter **Varazze** (hp 3) also work a small farm in back.

If the PCs knock, Mama Nocera refuses to let them in unless they state that they want to buy clothes. The PCs can purchase warm clothes and boots from the family at the standard prices.

G. Woodcutter's House.

> This is a very small shack. There are several piles of chopped wood, cut planks, and unfinished trunks and limbs around the house. A man chops wood in back.

The woodcutter, **Giuseppe** (hp 6, hand axe, long bow), is single and pious. He eats with Mama Nocera's family occasionally and watches out for them. Giuseppe provides wood to Pamparato for his forge, to all who need raw materials for fences and the like, and spends some time making furniture, barrels, and other things that the town needs. He also serves as the town's fletcher, making bows and arrows for the people to use for hunting game.

Giuseppe is intimidated by women and large numbers of strangers. Faced with these terms, he restricts his nervous conversations to business. If a lone male PC befriends Giuseppe, he may yield some important information.

Giuseppe saw a beautiful woman in the forest two or three times when he was cutting wood, but he stayed away, thinking the encounter was strange. He does not reveal this information, however, unless the PCs specifically ask him about a woman in the woods (maybe after hearing it from Zoldo), because he is embarrassed that he was attracted to her. Giuseppe felt an evil emanating from her, but the PCs might not be able to tell whether he actually could feel evil or if he is just reflecting his fear of women in general.

The woman he saw was Gornalunga prowling about in her changed form.

H. Blacksmith.

> This building is well-constructed. It consists of a forge and working area, and an adjoining house. A burly man pounds away in his forge.

The blacksmith, **Pamparato** (hp 8, hammer), is one of the village's hardest working, most valuable residents. He earns his living mostly by making fish hooks, arrowheads, small farming implements, and shoeing the few donkeys that need it. He sells the arrowheads to Giuseppe, the woodcutter and fletcher. He orders pig iron through Randazzo.

If the PCs can get Pamparato to take a break, maybe by offering him lunch, he talks the PCs.

Pamparato learned the trade almost entirely on his own, and produces a less-than-perfect product most of the time. Still, his skills are far better than any of the other residents, and his goods are always needed. Pamparato stamps all of his products with an ornate "P."

Randazzo occasionally asks Pamparato to make a batch of swords, spiked iron caps for clubs, or spearheads, explaining that Pamparato makes the best within hundreds of miles and merchants buy them up. This somewhat flatters Pamparato, and so he hasn't really questioned the truth of the matter. Randazzo actually gets the weapons for Gornalunga and her minions. (The weapons are not really of any special quality.)

Pamparato may be helpful repairing the PCs metal gear after they spend a day or two in the swamp. If the PCs ask him to do so, or if they purchase weapons or armor, he is happy to inform them of how highly his workmanship is in demand in the outside

world. Once the PCs see the quality of his workmanship, they may question this, prompting them to check out the warehouse.

If the PCs are carrying high-quality or magical arms, he is absolutely flabbergasted and begs to study the workmanship. This is a sure-fire way to get Pamparato to engage in conversation.

Pamparato has very few arms ready made—only four edged weapons and two blunt weapons. He has two small leather shields, a suit of leather armor, and a suit of chain mail he was trying to learn to make. It is only partial, providing AC 6 but weighing as much as a full suit. He charges 50% higher than stated in the *PHB* for weapons and armor.

Pamparato and his wife, **Lerici** (hp 4), their son, **Silandro** (hp 3), and their young daughter, **Fuizzana** (hp 2) work the farm in back.

If the PC's later confront Pamparato with the fact that his weapons have been used by Gornalunga's evil minions, he is extremely upset and ashamed.

I. Produce and Smoke Shop.

> This building is medium in size. You are immediately struck by the wonderful smell of cured pipe-weed. Through the open door you see a bounty of fresh fruits and vegetables. A sign swings above the door, reading, "Produce and Pipe-weed."

It is just past harvest time in Monetenapoleone, and so for a few weeks, there is a surplus of good things to eat. **Primolano's** (hp 5, knife) and **Mona's** (5 hp) family is the only one that spends time growing non-subsistence crops. With help from their daughter **Sciacca** (hp 4) and sons **Falcone** (hp 5) and **Poschiavo** (hp 2), the family grows tobacco, fruits, and vegetables, selling them in their store. Those that don't sell immediately are preserved and sold during the rest of the year. They also slaughter surplus chickens and pigs for a high price. Of course they raise subsistence crops for their own family.

They are some of the nicest residents of Monetenapoleone and converse kindly with the PCs.

This family owns plenty of livestock and three oxen (the only beasts of burden in Monetenapoleone besides Civezzano's ox, which he bought from Primolano). Primolano and Mona have lost several animals, more than can reasonably be blamed on normal wild predators. Some vegetables occasionally turn up missing, too. In fact, they just lost a pig two days ago. They have yet to catch any thieves.

If a PC with tracking proficiency checks around the perimeter of the family's farm, he can find large humanoid tracks (3 ogres). The tracks enter the farm (where the PC can find several trampled squash vines), go through the livestock yard, and exit over a fence.

The family becomes frightened if the PCs mention that massive humanoids are tramping about a few feet from their house. Primolano spreads the news especially quickly that night at the inn, causing quite a fuss and attracting much unhealthy attention to the PCs.

J. Bakery.

> From the smell emanating from this small building, you can tell that this is a bakery. The front door is closed, but you can see motion through the windows.

The bakery is a small building with two rooms, one for sleeping and living and another with two stone stoves and several flat tables for baking.

The baker, **Gagliano** (hp 3), his wife, **Salvietti** (hp 3), and his daughter, **Rosanna** (hp 3), bake bread and tend a small farm. Gagliano's son, **Viareggio** (hp 4), raises grain and potato crops in a large plot nearby to provide them with flour. Grain is almost impossible to grow in this cold climate, so the family ends up making mostly potato bread.

Though the bread is fresh and appetizing every morning, the family has little information of interest to the PCs.

K. Civezzano's.

> This run-down old house is quite small. Several sheds lean against the side of the house. They are filled to the roofs with a dense earth-brown substance. The door to the house is shut, but smoke curls up from the chimney. There is no placard to indicate whether or not this is a business.

Out of this unlabeled establishment, **Civezzano** (hp 6, long knife, short bow, tracking proficiency) runs a peat fertilizer and fuel business. He is a widower with no children. The building is just large enough for him. The townsfolk purchase much peat in the spring for their farms, and a great deal in the winter for fuel. In between Civezzano spends his time harvesting and preparing it. Currently, his sheds are full to the rim with the furry stuff.

Civezzano is fortunate enough to own an ox and a cart to haul peat back from the swamp.

Civezzano knows more than anyone else about the Bel Paese swamp, because he travels there every few days to cut peat. He takes the same trail every day, which can be easily followed by the PCs once he points it out to them. It is the quickest route.

Civezzano is eager to see someone rid Monetenapoleone of its mysterious evil. Indeed, his wife and children turned up missing while picking berries at the edge of the forest. He could not locate any sign of them (it rained shortly after) but blames evil creatures from the Bel Paese swamp prowling about the forest. He knows the swamp sprang into existence immediately after the abbey was overrun decades ago, and he believes whatever evil infests the area is centered within the swamp. He has tried penetrating the swamp several times, but he has always succumbed to the disorienting effects of the swamp (see "The Bel Paese").

Civezzano has seen "giants" prowling about the misty swamp and some unnatural-looking humanoids. (He saw ogres and undead monsters but does not know enough about them to speculate.) Also, he has found several tracks leading in and out of the swamp and throughout the surrounding forest that were too large to belong to normal men. He has a fatalistic attitude about working in such proximity to the unnatural dangers, and he continues to harvest the edge of the swamp. He feels that as long as he respects the dangers of the swamp and stays away after nightfall, he can remain unharmed.

If the PCs announce that they plan to enter the swamp, he advises that many creatures of the swamp protect themselves with poison, (which might convince wise PCs to prepare *neutralize poison* spells.)

Though Civezzano knows more than most in the town, he keeps to himself and so has not attracted the attention of Gornalunga's spies (at least not since she kidnapped and killed his family). He only rarely goes to the inn for a drink, because he is very poor.

Civezzano will not accompany the PCs or loan them his ox under any circumstances.

L. Order of the Bright Sun.

This is the largest building in Monetenapoleone. It has been maintained in fairly good repair, with fading white-washed outer walls and leaf-strewn patios. The only entrance to the building is a tall archway sealed by a tall, sturdy iron gate.

Through the gate you can see into an inner courtyard, where robe-clad monks quietly go about their business. A simple iron plaque on the gate reads "The Holy Order of the Bright Sun."

The monastery is a poor replacement for the Abbey of Pietrasanta, which the healing order once occupied. Only eight clerics now remain of the Order of the Bright Sun, most of whom are 1st level. None of the clerics are armed. They rarely venture outside the monastery, and then only to get necessary items. They will not leave the monastery to treat the sick; the sick must be brought to them.

The monastery is a simple rectangle built around a central courtyard. The first level of the monastery contains a small chapel and library, and the second contains the living quarters. The clerics spend most of their time in meditation or working the large plot behind the monastery.

The PCs are greeted at the locked wrought-iron gate by Racalmito, the head of the order. He talks to the PCs only through the gate unless they convince him that they are trustworthy and good enough to be permitted inside.

Racalmito: AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; P3; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; W13; Spells: *cure light wounds, protection from evil, slow poison.*

Racalmito is 60 years old. He joined the order four decades ago, and has learned some information about the evil in the land from the few clerics that lived to tell of the attack and chose to remain in Monetenapoleone. After they died, Racalmito became the senior member of the order.

If the PCs convince Racalmito to open the gates, he leads them to a sitting area on a patio in the courtyard to talk in relative privacy. He has no food to offer them, since the monks eat only at specified times and never with outsiders.

Racalmito is essentially good, but he is very nervous about speaking to the PCs. As far as he is concerned, Vittorio stuck his nose into evil and immediately disappeared. Racalmito is afraid that soon, if he does not stop aiding people who mean well, evil will visit the monastery itself. Even if the PCs gain his confidence (which should require some skillful role-playing on the PCs part) Racalmito speaks in hushed tones.

Racalmito can explain much of the information provided in "Nora's Curse," though not all of what he knows is accurate or complete. He can explain the history of the town and abbey, though he does not know what kind of creatures were responsible for driving the clerics out of Pietrasanta and flooding the area. He can tell the PCs of the abbey, what it looks like (which he knows from descriptions, though of course he has never seen it), and what it was used for. He knows that there are crypts underneath the abbey, but not how to gain access.

Secretly, Racalmito suspects that a witch of some sort has a hold on the town, because from some of the local men he has heard reports of a beautiful, tempting lady of the mists. All of the men who confessed to seeing the lady of the mists have disappeared (such as Moliterno, though he mentions Moliterno's name only if the PCs bring it up). He does not divulge any of this information or any of his suspicions unless the PCs ask him directly about the lady (from hearing about it from other townsfolk like Civezzano or Zoldo).

Racalmito logically suspects that the source of the evil is somewhere in the Bel Paese swamp. He also knows about the cursed births, but the PCs are hard pressed to get him to talk about it. He actually witnessed one cursed birth 35 years ago and has had nightmares about it ever since, though he doesn't understand what happened. He can give a graphic account of a cursed birth (see "Nora's Curse"). He refuses to attempt to heal or even see a woman whom he suspects of having a cursed child, including Nora. He may even advise the PCs to distance themselves from the family's misfortune before it strikes them somehow.

Racalmito can tell the PCs that Vittorio was a priest belonging to another healing order from afar, who came to Monetenapoleone to look at some unique texts the Order of the Bright Sun has in its small library. Racalmito thinks he is a strange man, for he uses more than just his priestly abilities to heal people. He often uses strange instruments and "scientific" procedures that are foreign to clerics of the healing orders. (Vittorio is actually a dual-classed necromancer/priest who experiments with combinations of science and faith. For more information, see area **16**.)

The PCs should ask at some point to have access to Vittorio's room. It is difficult to convince Racalmito to give the PCs access, since in the first place it is unorthodox to allow even good-natured outsiders into the monks' private quarters, and in the second place he is suspicious of Vittorio's methods. He will have to be absolutely convinced of the PCs integrity, virtue, and potential to show them the room.

Racalmito has not gone through Vittorio's belongings or moved anything since he disappeared, though he planned to do so soon.

When they finally get in, the PCs find Vittorio's spare clothes and sundries on his unmade bed. Spread out upon the table are some strange mechanical devices and items. Most of the devices are beyond a PCs comprehension, though with a successful intelligence check a bard, a mage, or a PC with healing proficiency might identify them as crude surgical devices such as scalpels, clamps, saws, a hypodermic needle, a primitive stomach pump, a jar of leeches, a jar of sedative liquid, etc.

Five items in particular are clustered together in a clear area of the table, and are of special importance to the PCs: a long glass tube of seawater, a sewing needle wrapped tightly with a strand of long brown hair (a strand of Nora's hair), a vial of holy water, a wide shallow basin, and a large clear jar gilded with some symbols in gold. The basin has been blessed and detects as mildly magic. The jar detects of strong divination magic.

Upon a scrap of paper that has fallen under the table is scribbled, "anoint, then float," in Vittorio's writing.

Vittorio was constructing a charm to help him track down Nora's true baby. In the days that he studied Nora's curse, he discovered all the information in the section "Nora's Curse" through research and spells, but told no one. He knows the hag's plans and the fate of each baby.

Vittorio had almost finished his charm, but he needed a cork for the jar and ventured out in the middle of the night to find one when he was captured by Gornalunga's ogres. He now sits imprisoned in Gornalunga's lair.

The PCs can attempt to finish Vittorio's charm. To assemble it, the PCs must pour the vial of holy water into the blessed basin, soak or submerge the needle wrapped with hair in the holy water, fill the decorated jar with the sea water, and place the needle into the jar. If assembled in this manner, the needle floats magically on top of the fluid like a compass. The needle always points toward Nora's true baby.

No other combination or order of steps will work; however, if the PCs erroneously mix the holy water and sea water, it separates in a few minutes, and the PCs can try again.

Once assembled, the charm is very fragile. If vigorously disturbed or spilled, it is ruined, and the needle sinks to the bottom. Though a cork is not required for the charm to work, the PCs really ought to find one to seal the jar, which they can get at Ormea's for a single copper piece.

Also on the table underneath a large jar is a slip of paper in Vittorio's handwriting which says "Must bring back for reversing procedure during labor, which judging from measurements is nine days hence in the evening." Since Vittorio disappeared two days before the PCs arrived, they can figure out that Nora is due to give birth no later than on the eighth day since they arrived. (Vittorio did write the note on the same day he was kidnapped). There is nothing of interest in Vittorio's bags.

If the PCs fail to convince Racalmito to give them access to Vittorio's room, a PC thief may try discovering which room is his and climb in through a window. If the clerics catch the thief, they try to chase him away.

Bel Paese Swamp

Sooner or later the PCs should venture into the swamp to get to the heart of the matter. Before they go, they should know a little about what they face and what they must do, although they almost certainly will not know their adversary is a hag nor exactly how to reverse Nora's curse. Unless they have Vittorio's charm, they probably waste valuable time in the swamp.

Encounters in the Bel Paese

Roll 1d6 twice in the day and twice at night. A roll of 1 is an encounter. If an encounter is indicated, roll 1d6 during the day, 1d6+4 at night.

1. Leech swarm (200): INT 0; AL Nil; AC 10; MV 3, swim 1; HD 1–2; THAC0 NA; #AT 1; Dmg Special; SZ 10′ diameter; ML 5; XP 15; MC2. The

PCs stumble into this swarm of tiny leeches in waist-deep water. They inflict 1d10 hp damage per round collectively (distribute among the party) while the PCs remain in the water. An area attack inflicting 10 hp damage disperses the swarm.

2. Ogres (2–5): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 26 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; SZ L (9′ tall); ML 11; XP 270; *MM*/272; 2d4 gp each.

These minions of Gornalunga attack the PCs on sight.

3. Snakes, poisonous (6): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 7; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison causes 2d4 hp damage if victim fails save; SZ S (5′ long); ML 8; XP 175; MC1. The PCs stumble into this group of snakes in a pile of decaying leaves, trying to stay warm. Because of the cold, the snakes are slower than normal and attack only every other round.

4. Snake, giant poisonous: INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 4+2; hp 23; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA poison causes 3d6 hp damage if victim fails save; SZ M (12′ long); ML 9; XP 420; *MM*/320.

Large enough to swallow a human, this snake drops on an unsuspecting PC from a low branch.

5. Stirges (15): INT animal; AL nil; AC 8; MV 3, fly 18; HD 1+1; hp 5 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA drains blood for 1d4 per round after a successful hit; SZ S (2′ wingspan); ML 8; XP 175; *MM*/332.

These hungry stirges attack whether the PCs are camped or traveling.

6. Spiders, huge (8): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA poison causes 15 hp damage if victim fails save; SZ M (6′ diameter); ML 8; XP 270; *MM*/326.

These spiders are marauding for food, and they stumble onto the PCs whether they are camped or traveling. An alert PC might hear them moving through the growth while they are still a few rounds off.

Once they have been dealt with, a PC with tracking proficiency might be able to follow the spiders' trail for a mile or two to their web complex. Some searching there may uncover treasure from the spiders' previous victims, including 15 gp, a *potion of healing,* a *potion of delusion,* and a beautiful but nonmagical gold wand worth 200 gp.

7. Toad, giant: INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 6; HD 2+4; hp 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ M (5′ long); ML 7; XP 120; *MM*/42.

If the PCs are traveling, the toad is lying in wait for prey, and the PCs suffer a –3 penalty to their surprise roll. If the PCs are camped, the toad is wandering in search of food.

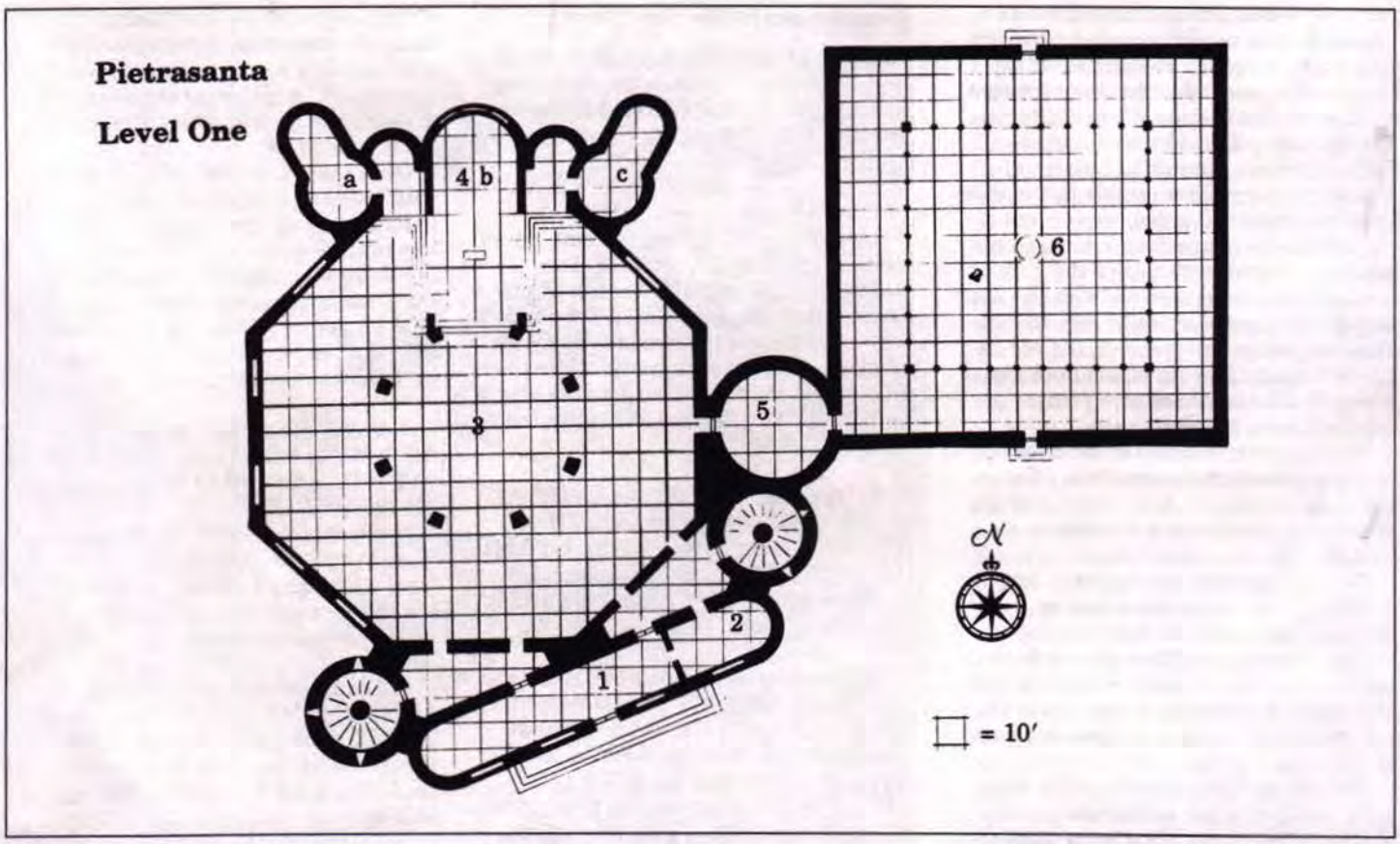
8. Centipedes, huge (15): INT non-; AL N; AC 9; MV 21; HD (1 hp); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA weak poison paralyzes 1d6 hours though victim saves at +4; SZ T (6′); ML 5; XP 35; *MM*/42.

9. Skeletons (20): INT non-; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65; *MM*/315.

Gornalunga animated these skeletons, but they wandered off mindlessly years ago. They fight to the death with rusty spears and swords. The swords are stamped with Pamparato's distinctive "P."

10. Zombies, ogre (2): INT non-; AL N; AC 6; MV 9; HD 6; hp 26, 39; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 4d4; SZ L; ML 20; XP 650; *MM*/373, modified.

These two monsters once lived with Gornalunga, but they made her angry for one reason or another. The enraged hag killed them, animated their corpses, and turned them loose into the swamp. The zombies are in wretched condition from the combined effects of swamp water and natural decay.



The swamp is an evil place and seems to have a mind of its own; the will of the swamp tends to push out all intruders. Travelers that penetrate more than a few miles into the swamp stand a 90% chance of losing their direction and finding themselves exiting the swamp not far from where they entered. (See table 62 in the *PHB,* treating conditions as heavy fog.) Gornalunga and her servants are immune to this effect. Vittorio's charm allows the PCs to make directly for Gornalunga (who remains in the abbey for the remainder of this adventure, being uncomfortable from her pregnancy), though they may be completely disoriented as to their precise location and direction.

Just before the PCs enter the swamp, read the following:

> You stand on the last patch of firm land at the edge of the Bel Paese swamp. It looks gloomy and foggy within. Mosses hang from the trees, and scrubby bushes grow around the many stagnant pools. It looks like muddy going. The only sounds are ravens' calls from within.

Ambush

If Randazzo or his assistants found out that the PCs are stirring up trouble (more than likely), they ambush the PCs shortly after they enter the swamp.

Randazzo, Tolmezzo, Dalmazzo (see area **C**), and four ogres (see area **20**) lie in wait in some thick brush. Randazzo attempts to use his *ring of the swamp* to capture as many PCs as possible in quicksand by using its power on the ground directly under the PCs' feet. PCs barely within the area of effect can pull themselves out in one round. PCs trapped in the center of the quicksand must be helped by a free PC for a round to get out.

The ambushers' only other strategy is to spring from their hiding spot and attack as a group.

If the PCs discovered and incapacitated the spies earlier in the adventure, the ambush force still exists, but instead consists of three ogres for every two PCs (rounded up).

The PCs might enter the swamp in a different place rather than follow the path that Civezzano uses to cut peat. This tactic makes little difference, because the abbey is pretty much centered in the swamp. If the PCs are subject to ambush, they are ambushed no matter where they enter.

The number of ogres killed during the ambush does not affect the number in Gornalunga's lair. There are nearly 100 ogres total in and around the swamp under Gornalunga's control, many of which have never seen the abbey, since they usually remain spread throughout the wilderness.

Pietrasanta Abbey

The priests of the Bright Sun healing order built the Abbey of Pietrasanta two centuries ago as a secluded monastery outside of Monetenapoleone. After Gornalunga drove them away and flooded the area, she lived in the abbey for a few months. When she discovered the crypts below, she tunneled out a new lair. She dismantled the means of entering the crypts and placed guards in the abbey to keep visitors from getting in what she now considers a sealed and unusable back entrance.

If Randazzo and the spies discovered the PCs' meddling, Gornalunga's lair is

on alert, holding a slightly larger complement of ogres. Since none of the PCs' adversaries expect them to make it through the swamp, even if the PCs do survive an ambush, they can still surprise creatures anywhere within the abbey and lair. On the other hand, if the PCs let slip that Vittorio's charm will lead them right to Gornalunga's front door, no creatures are surprised in the abbey or the lair.

If Randazzo ambushes the PCs, Gornalunga watches from the *hag eye* around his neck. She uses what she learns about the PCs to plan her strategy. Gornalunga is a cunning opponent with many resources; change the abbey and lair descriptions to reflect her plans for the PCs arrival. If the PCs foolishly claim Randazzo's hag eye and carry it in openly, Gornalunga keeps tabs on the PCs throughout the adventure, attacking with her minions to her greatest advantage. In this case, no creatures in the abbey or lair can be surprised.

Penalties for fighting in knee- to hip-deep water are –1 to hit, with no bonus to AC from Dexterity.

Read the following as the PCs approach the abbey:

> Through the mists and mossy trees, you see a large structure. As you approach, you can see more details.
>
> It is magnificent: a large, octagonal building dominates the structure, set at the top with stained glass windows, many of which are broken. To the right stretches a low, square building. Rising from between the two is a tall bell tower, probably one hundred feet high. A pair of double doors leads into a fore structure attached to the octagonal building. A smaller door leads into the square building.
>
> Luckily the complex seems to be set slightly above the surrounding land, and the water grows shallower closer to the building.

The foul pond is 4′ deep before the stairs, only 2′ high before the door.

The small cloister door is barred shut from the inside and still quite sound. The double doors are unlocked and unbarred, but are rotted and rusted shut. The PCs can beat their way in with ease; unless they silence the job, however, they alert the monsters in areas **1–12** to their presence. The PCs can gain access simply by climbing in any of the large stone windows situated at about 5′ above the ground.

Level One

The scum-caked, stagnant water is 2′ high on the whole first floor except in the altar and chapel areas. Debris, rotting vegetation, and mold collect everywhere.

1. Entrance

> You stand in a flooded antechamber. The stagnant water reeks of decay. The antechamber is over one hundred feet long. Two sets of double doors lead south, and a small door leads east. The entrance doors lead south.

Five zombies lurk under the water here. If any of the four entrances to this room is opened, the zombies activate and attack, gaining a +3 bonus to their surprise roll. If the PCs climbed in through the windows, they might bump into the sunken bodies, but the zombies do not attack unless disturbed further or unless the doors are opened.

These zombies are so bloated and smelly from being submerged in the water for long periods that the PCs must make a saving throw v. poison at the start of combat or suffer –2 to hit, –2 to damage, and +2 to AC penalties from nausea.

Zombies (5): INT non-; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65; *MM*/373.

2. Monks' Walk.

> This was evidently a place of private meditation. A stone statue of a woman with a large pointed crown stands in the alcove at the east end.

Indeed, this area was kept separate from the public when inhabited by the clerics. The statue depicts the order's healing goddess and is non-magical.

3. Nave.

> Stained glass windows are set into the upper section of this huge area, but they are broken and dimmed and currently lack any beauty. Open windows allow dim light into the room. Eight central pillars are ornately decorated. Steps lead to a raised area to the north, where the priests must have once lead worship services. One small door leads east.
>
> This once must have been a magnificent chapel. Now, swampy water and piles of rotting debris fill the room.

Gornalunga's crew disassembled the wooden pews for firewood. Some of the pews that were too rotten, along with other junk, jut out of the water. The partially submerged debris creates a hazard. As the PCs pick their way through the room, pieces occasionally shift to bump a leg, which may create the illusion that something alive lurks beneath the surface. PCs moving faster than ⅓ movement rate through this room must make a Dexterity check or fall.

4. Altar and Chapels. Read the following when the PCs stand in area **4b**.

> This dry section is the most ornately decorated you have seen so far. All the walls are carved in relief. An altar stands in the middle of the floor. The two side chapels are windowless and very dark.

A PC with the tracking proficiency can see that this area has been used frequently and recently. This dry place serves as the lair of a meazel.

Meazel: INT low; AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 4; hp 19; THAC0 15; AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4; SA strangle; SD thieving abilities (PP 45%, MS 33%, HS 25%); SZ M; ML 12; XP 120 MC3. Garrote.

The meazel does not attack directly when outnumbered, but rather pursues the PCs stealthily until a good moment to attack appears. It waits until a PC is separated or the rest of the PCs are busy (e.g., if a PC mage hangs back while the rest melee with the shambling mound in area **6**) before strangling a victim. The meazel is in its native environment and can disguise itself half-submerged in the knee deep muck of most of the complex.

The meazel uses the windows in area **3** for access and so avoids the shambling mound and the zombies.

a. This chapel contains a "bed" of leaves for the meazel. A normal sarcophagus stands in the alcove, decorated with a robed figure.

b. Hidden in a secret compartment behind the altar is the meazel's treasure. It consists of a *short sword +1* with 4 charges that allows the wielder to expend one charge and increase it to +3 for five rounds, 50 gp, a ruby worth 100 gp, and a brass amulet that allows the wearer to *animate object* at 15th level. Two charges remain in the amulet.

c. This chapel contains a false sarcophagus in the alcove. Beneath it are the stairs to the crypts. The sarcophagus moves magically when the bell is rung from the bell tower. If a PC thief examines the sarcophagus, he can see that it slides forward on tracks but can find no wires or triggers to activate it.

The sarcophagus cannot be moved by any means except by ringing the bell (See "Hoisting the Bell" for complete details). Once the PCs successfully hoist the bell and ring it, the sarcophagus moves to grant them access.

5. Tower Ground Floor. This room is empty save for stagnant water.

6. Cloister.

> You stand knee-deep in rotting vegetation and water. This area must be a cloister, where the clerics once came to meditate. It probably once contained a beautiful garden, but now the area is choked with muck, moss-covered saplings, and swamp shrubbery. Creeping vines cling to the pillars that separate the covered walkway from the open area. A fountain rests in the middle, spouting no water.
>
> A door to the south stands barred from this side, a door to the west leads into the tower, and a door to the north hangs limply from its bottom hinge.

The cloister has become the lair of one of the most terrible creatures of the swamp, the shambling mound. The monster becomes aware of PCs as soon as they disturb the water anywhere in the cloister. It sits in its favorite spot around the fountain, appearing to be one of the many piles of rotting vegetation.

If the PCs approach the fountain, the mound waits and tries to surprise the PCs. Infravision does not reveal its presence. If the PCs stay away from the fountain, the mound sneaks forward to attack, still gaining its bonus to surprise.

Shambling Mound: INT low; AL N; AC 0; MV 6; HD 10; hp 56; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8/2d8; SA –3 to opponent's surprise roll, if both arms hit victim is drawn into creature to suffocate in 2d4 rounds; SD immune to fire and blunt weapons, half damage from cold and edged weapons, lightning causes it to grow 1 HD, can fully heal self in 12 hours; SZ L (9′ tall); ML18; XP 8,000; *MM*/293.

In the fountain the mound has collected 500 gp and a *jewel of attacks.* Scattered in a 15′ diameter circle in the muck around the fountain the mound has collected 5 random gems, 1,000 gp, one hermetically sealed jar of *Keoghtom's ointment,* a *Murlynd's spoon,* a wizard's scroll of *levitate* (cast at 9th level), and 693 pieces of random valueless junk such as silverware, battered candlestick holders, rotted planks, old shoes, etc. (only 1% of the items at the start are actual treasure). The PCs must dig in the muck to find the scattered treasure, discovering 10 random pieces of "treasure" per person each turn. Without a systematic approach, the PCs may spend a long time looking before they pull up anything of value.

After the PCs have dealt with the mound, they are free to search the muck for the bell, which was tossed here from the tower 100′ above (see area **13** for the bell's significance). The force of the drop drove it almost completely into the muck, so that once the PCs start looking for it, they have a 3% cumulative chance per PC/round to find it. The PCs cannot blunder into the bell unless they are specifically looking for it.

The magical brass bell is in perfect shape, unharmed by the fall or the muck. Even the wooden parts are intact. It is beautifully crafted and carved with images of the priests' sun goddess. The PCs must find a way to get the bell into the bell tower in order to proceed into the crypts (see "Hoisting the Bell").

Level Two

Rot and decay from moisture still affects the contents of the building, but there is no standing water here, as on the first level. The obliviax's memory drain ability reaches down into many parts of the second level (see area **11** for more information).

7. Bedrooms.

> The clerics evidently slept in these rooms. They contain rotting furniture and clothing.

These rooms now hold only useless personal effects that were left behind when Gornalunga's ogres attacked. Gornalunga and the meazel have already removed anything of value. The easternmost room was a broom closet, and contains cleaning items, tools, and twelve 50′ lengths of sturdy rope. The PCs could use the rope to raise the bell to the top of the tower.

8. Abbot's Room.

This room was apparently a bedroom for a leader of the order. It is now in shambles. Most of the furniture is torn and rotting.

Gornalunga and the meazel ransacked the room and removed all valuables. A locked secret compartment on the southwestern wall remains undiscovered. It contains a priest scroll inscribed with the spell *cure critical wounds.*

9. Tower Library.

The walls of this room are lined with bookcases. Several of the shelves have collapsed, spilling books onto the floor. The books are all rotting.

If the PCs search through the books, they have a cumulative 2% chance per PC/turn to discover a lone book that has not rotted or faded. It is a *book of infinite spells.* It contains 23 pages, most of which are blank. *Scare* is inscribed on page 1, *bind* on 4, *magic missile* on 10, tongues on 19, and *know alignment* on 20.

Level Three

10. Tower Third Floor.

You can see all the way up through the tower to the roof from this floor. Stairs lead to a balcony that still looks stable, but the rest of the wooden structure is ruined. Collapsed rafters, planks, and ropes are jumbled precariously above. There are many planks on the floor, as well.

PCs examining the planks on the floor can tell that they fell from above and are weakened from rot and termites.

Level Four

11. Balcony.

The wooden balcony upon which you stand seems unstable. The floor is about fifty feet below. The top of the tower is about thirty feet above. The jumbled beams above look rotten and ready to collapse. Apparently an entire floor at the top of the tower collapsed long ago.

Growing under the west window in a pile of dirt and leaves is an obliviax that Gornalunga transplanted here. The 60′ area of effect of its memory drain ability reaches down into the second level staircase and areas **8, 9, 10, 11,** and **12.** The PCs are attacked by the obliviax's memory drain when they exit the staircase onto level two. PCs who fail their saves against the drain lose the last 24 hours of memory and all memorized spells. The obliviax attacks mages, then priests, then other spellcasters, but after it has successfully drained a PC, it does not use its ability again for 24 hours.

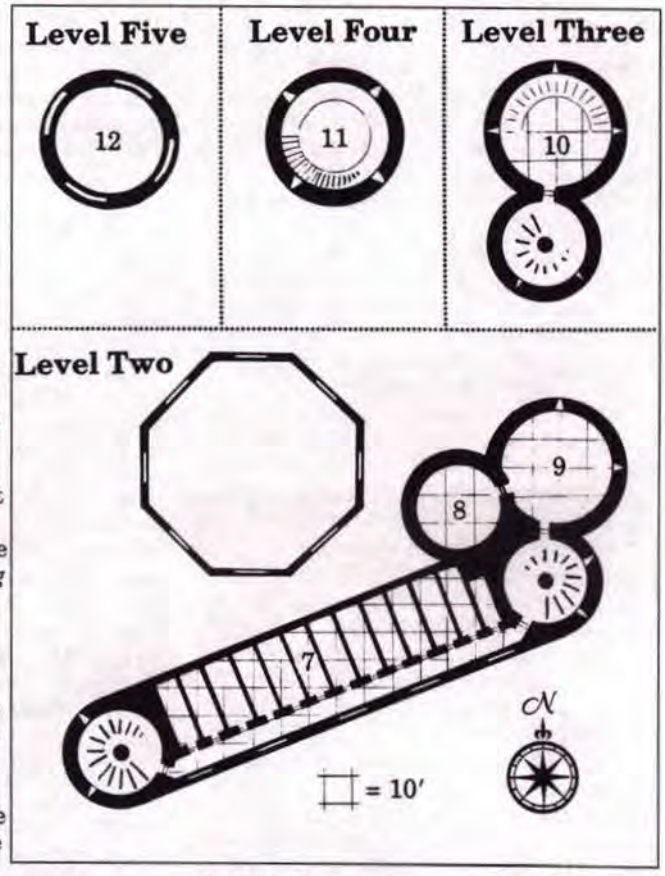
Obliviax: INT average; AL NE; AC 10; MV Nil; HD (2 hp); THAC0 20; #AT Nil; SA steal and cast spells; SZ T (6′ square); ML 9; XP 35; *MM*/293. The memory moss has *stinking cloud, magic missile* (×2) (3 missiles), *darkness 15′ radius,* and *hold monster* available. It casts those spells in that order unless it has already stolen more powerful offensive spells from the PCs.

After the PCs defeat the obliviax, a PC may eat the moss to attempt to gain the memories that the obliviax has acquired. If the PC saves vs. poison, he has absorbed the memories. If the save fails, the PC falls ill for 3d6 turns. Absorbed memories that were not originally stolen from the PC who consumes the monster fade in 24 hours.

A ladder once allowed access to the belfry above, but both the ladder and the belfry floor have been destroyed by time and the elements. A brave PC can use the unsturdy woodwork to climb up.

A thief PC can make the climb automatically. Any other PC must roll a Wisdom check or take a bad step, causing some of the beams to shift and collapse. In the event of a collapse, all climbing PCs suffer 2d6 hp damage from buffeting debris and fall either to the balcony 10′–30′ below (50%) or the floor 60′–80′ below (50%). PCs on the balcony when the beams collapse suffer 2d6 hp damage with no save; PCs on the floor suffer 4d6 unless they roll a save vs. dragon breath to scramble out the door.

Once a PC makes it to the top, he can show other PCs which beams are stable. Unless other circumstances arise, all should be able to climb safely.



Level Five

12. Destroyed Belfry.

There is no longer a floor here, but by clinging to the remaining solid joists you can look around. A mechanism of some sort is attached to the ceiling.

If a PC finds a way to the top of the tower, he sees that much of the debris in the tower was once part of the belfry floor. A PC who examines the ceiling can tell that a large bell once hung here, and that the mechanism by which it was secured is still intact. If a PC examines the window ledges, he sees that the stone railing on the east window has been bashed out. When Gornalunga sealed the entrance to the crypt, she broke it out to make room to toss the bell down into the cloister.

The PCs must replace the bell and ring it in order to gain access to the crypts below Pietrasanta. See "Hoisting the Bell" sidebar for more information.

Underground Level

The excavations under Pietrasanta were dug right into the bedrock. The

Hoisting the Bell

The clerics who built the Abbey of Pietrasanta wanted their dead to remain undisturbed unless another was to be buried. They cast a magical bell and used spells to ensure the crypts could be accessed only when the bell was rung.

Gornalunga discovered this ward and decided to use it to her advantage. She tunneled her lair from the Abbey, then sealed that entrance by removing the bell and hurling it into the mud of the flooded cloister below. The bell radiates strong alteration magic.

To open the crypts, the PCs must discover the bell and hoist it back into place, then ring it. The PCs should be able to manage this engineering feat. They could use magic, the ropes from the broom closet, or other things they might think of. The bell is solid brass and weighs 1,100 lbs. It is too wide (8′) to fit through the windows anywhere but the eastern window in the belfry. It is also too wide to fit through the two doorways to the tower.

If the PCs use the twelve 50′ lengths of rope from the broom closet, they could raise it to the top of the tower in stages. For instance, they could raise the bell to the roof of the cloister, then up to level four, then up to the belfry. Each rope can hold 200 lbs. before breaking. Therefore, the PCs must have six ropes secure at all times to prevent the bell from breaking free and falling.

Once the PCs get the bell into the belfry, they should have no problem rehanging it. The hasps are intact, as are the posts on the bell. Still, there are only a few sturdy beams in the belfry, and no floor, so the PCs may wish to take precautionary measures to avoid a fall, such as using safety ropes, or magic (such as found on the wizard scroll in area **6**).

Once the bell has been hung, the PCs need only tie a rope to the hasp and get it swinging. The bell's clapper is intact. The bell peals forth a heartening sound when rung, giving all good and neutral humans who hear it a +1 attack bonus for 24 hours. The bell cannot be heard underground.

If the PCs go back to area **4c** after the bell has been rung, they will see that the sarcophagus has moved forward, exposing a staircase leading down.

lower levels constantly drip with water seeping in from the swamp above, but are not flooded deeply—creating just enough moisture to be comfortable for a greenhag (no attack penalties for anyone). The air stinks of wet hair. There is no lighting except where noted.

13. Crypt Entrance. Once the PCs hoist the bell and ring it, the sarcophagus (area **4**) moves to grant them access.

> The sarcophagus slides away from the wall to reveal an opening in the floor. It is the mouth of a staircase leading down into inky darkness. The air coming up out of it is very stale.

The sarcophagus slides back to its original position over the staircase 3 turns after it opens, crushing most mundane items the PCs might have used to try to wedge it open, including iron stakes. Ringing the bell again opens it immediately. There is no way to open the entrance to the crypts from the inside. The PCs must escape through Gornalunga's tunnel.

14. Crypts.

> You are in the crypts below the Abbey, where the remains of many clerics that once served here are probably buried. There are nine crypts in all, spaced evenly on the north and south walls. The doors on the crypts have been sealed with plaster.

The PCs can open each crypt by breaking the plaster seal on the door. Many PCs may have alignment problems with disturbing the dead. Each crypt contains a shrouded skeletal body on a pedestal. Some crypts contain additional items: Crypt: **A)** a *mace of disruption* rests on the body (the mace functions magically only for a lawful good character); **B)** 30 bodies are arranged in this common crypt; **E)** 12 gp; **F)** a cursed *sword +1*; **G)** a priest spell scroll inscribed with *animal summoning I.*

A PC who examines the plaster around crypt **I** can see that it is newer than the rest. Breaking the plaster seal on this crypt triggers a special *glyph of warding* that releases a cloud of poison gas into the room. Each round the PCs are in the gas they must save vs. poison or suffer 1d4 hp damage. The gas remains in the crypt for 6 rounds if the sarcophagus is open, 6 turns if the sarcophagus is closed. It does not spill into the tunnels if the secret door is opened. The *glyph* can be detected and erased by a successful Find/Remove Traps rolls.

A secret door on the back wall leads into Gornalunga's tunnels. She has placed skeletons in crypt **I** as guardians.

Skeletons (8): INT non-; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65; *MM*/315. They fight to the death with rusty swords. The swords are stamped with Pamparato's "P."

The skeletons are unaffected by the poison gas.

15. Gornalunga's Bedroom.

> You peer into what must be the bedroom of some intelligent creature. There is a pile of rotting hay in one corner, some wooden benches and tables in another, and a decorative floor-length mirror on one wall. A lantern rests on the table. Human bones litter the floor.

Gornalunga sleeps here, often eats here, and amuses herself here when not surveying her dominion.

The mirror on the wall was a gift from Trieste that allows the two hags to communicate between their two planes. By speaking a command word, Gornalunga can contact and speak with Trieste. Trieste can use the mirror for more. With command words, she can contact and speak with Gornalunga and *gate* herself or others through the mirror. As long as Trieste herself or creatures that she *gated* are in the Prime Material Plane, the mirror glows brightly as a fixed *gate* back through to Hades. When the last creature returns or dies, the *gate* closes. The *gate* stays open for a maximum of three days.

Trieste tries to use the mirror if Gornalunga is captured (see "Trieste Intervenes"). The mirror can be destroyed by striking it with a +1 or better magical weapon, destroying both the mirror and the weapon.

A sack buried beneath the hay contains Gornalunga's treasure, including two potions of *healing*, 5,000 sp, 3,000 gp, 100 pp, 5 gems, 1 statuette worth 20 gp, and a *ring of jumping.*

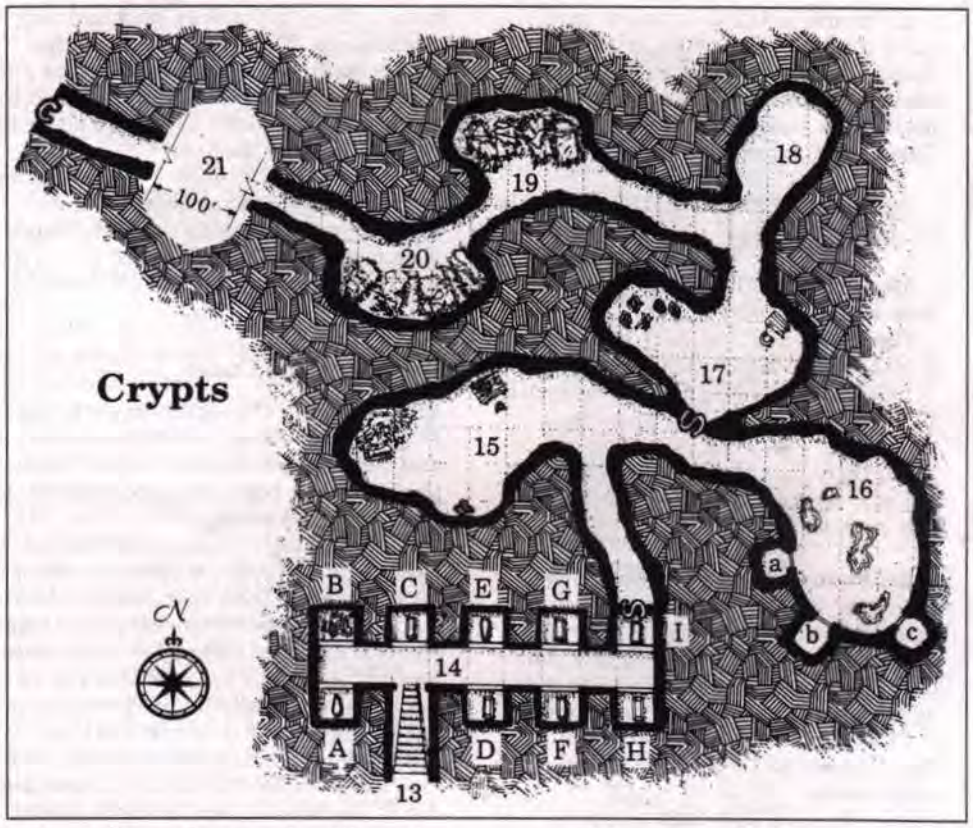
16. Torture Chamber.

> This room is nearly bare except for the pools of foul, stagnant water on the floor. There are three cell doors on the opposite end of the room.

Vittorio is currently locked in cell **a**. He is miserable from being trapped in ankle-deep water for several days. He has a cold, and his wounds are infected (his Movement is reduced to 6, and all his statistics are temporarily reduced by 2). Still, he is heartened that the PCs are here to rescue him and tries to find out in a few words how the PCs found him, what day it is, and what is left to be done. He informs the PCs (if they haven't already discovered it on their own) that they must capture the hag, not kill her or harm the baby she carries. If any of this comes as a shock to the PCs, he explains the basics of what has cursed Nora as quickly as possible. He has no suggestions for strategy on how to capture the hag.

Vittorio: AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; M3/P6 (dual-classed necromancer/priest); hp 29 (currently 7); THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; S 10, D 9, C 9, I 18, W 18, Ch 14. Spells: none memorized. If given a weapon, he helps the PCs in combat to the best of his ability.

Cell **b** contains a skeleton Gornalunga planned to animate later. Cell **c** is empty.



17. Sitting Area.

> You push open the secret door and peer into a dimly lit room. A wretched old woman sits in a chair with her back to you, but she turns quickly and rises as you enter. She wears tattered old rags and has wrinkled skin. Visibly pregnant, she is no normal woman. Her eyes glow with a fierce, unnatural fire, and her hands end in razor-sharp claws.

When the PCs finally find the secret door and open it, Gornalunga is sitting in this room contemplating what reward she will request for her upcoming delivery. She spent a long time many many years ago sealing the crypt door, so she does not think anyone will come that way. She is startled to see the PCs come in through the secret door but recovers quickly (unless they have been unwisely carrying the hag eye; in that case she is waiting with several ogres). She may utter a few sentences to the PCs, mockingly congratulating them for discovering the back door, only to find their deaths, before calling out to the guards. She tries to stall the PCs until her ogre minions arrive, then she attacks for all she is worth. If she cannot stall the PCs, she retreats down the tunnel until numbers are on her side.

If Vittorio is with the PCs, she tries to kill him quickly, fighting through other PCs to reach the hapless priest.

The ogre guards from areas **19** and **20** arrive in 2 rounds.

Gornalunga, greenhag: INT very; AL NE; AC –2; MV 12, swim 12; HD 9; hp 62; THAC0 9; #AT 2; Dmg 1d2+6/1d2+6; SA infravision 90', –5 penalty to opponent's surprise roll when in swamp; SD only surprised 10% of the time; mimic cries of humans and animals; SZ M; ML 17; XP 8,000; *MM*/181 (hag). Spells (once per round at 9th level of ability, at will): *audible glamer, dancing lights, invisibility, pass without trace, change self, speak with monsters, water breathing,* and *weakness.*

She can *animate dead* permanently once per week

Gornalunga also wears a *ring of spell storing* allowing her to cast *polymorph other* 3 times/day, *force cage* 1/week, and *putrefy water* 1/month. Any human who touches the ring receives 2d4 hp electrical damage. The ring was a gift from Trieste.

If Gornalunga is reduced to 10 hp or less, she activates her *invisibility* and *pass without trace* abilities to escape and fight another day.

Gornalunga also has Vittorio's personal belongings in a bag tied around her waist. It contains his *ring of protection +2* and his traveling spell book (his only spell book) inscribed with *burning hands, chill touch, detect magic,* and *read magic.*

Gornalunga enjoys total dominance over her ogre minions. She keeps them spread out so that they will not band against her, and she disciplines grumblers brutally. Occasionally, she makes zombies out of ogres she has killed as an example.

The PCs may try any number of tactics to capture Gornalunga. They may use the *hold monster* spell from area **11**, the *bind* spell from area **9,** the *animate* spell from area **4** on a piece of rope or a rug, or mundane means such as ropes, nets, or non-lethal subduing. Any single attack that causes Gornalunga 3 hp damage or more has a 20% chance of killing the baby she carries. PCs may attempt to attack with called shots (e.g., to the hag's head and limbs). Such attacks suffer a –4 penalty but have no chance of harming Nora's stolen baby.

If Vittorio is killed in this or any other combat, after melee, with his dying breath, he describes the basics of what is necessary for the PCs to reverse the curse (see "Reversing the Curse" for information).

18. Empty Chamber. This is simply an unused room.

19. Ogre lair. This is a disgusting area where the ogres sleep.

Ogres (4): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 29, 26 (×2), 23; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; SZ L (9′ tall); ML 11; XP 270; *MM*/272. 2d4 gp each.

20. Ogre lair. This, too, is a disgusting area where four more ogres sleep (see area **19** for statistics).

21. Front entrance. This tunnel runs over 100′ underground before ascending to the surface of the swamp on the side of a mossy knoll. It is concealed so skillfully that PCs have only a 10% chance of locating it from outside.

PCs who emerge from this opening find themselves just barely within sight of the abbey.

Returning with Gornalunga

Once the PCs have captured Gornalunga, they may attempt to bring her back to Monetenapoleone to reverse the curse. The PCs must restrain her in some manner, as she is very strong. Gornalunga takes advantage of any opportunity for escape the PCs give her, of course, but she seems quite collected and unconcerned, especially if the PCs have claimed Trieste's mirror in her bedroom and are carrying it back to Monetenapoleone. As long as the PCs take suitable precautions, getting back should not be too much of a problem. Gornalunga is depending on a rescue from Trieste.

On the other hand, if the PCs destroyed the mirror, and Gornalunga knows about it, she is desperate to escape. The PCs must take extra precautions and watch the hag constantly.

Once the PCs head for home, the swamp expels them in a day, less then a mile from where they entered, regardless of how hard or lightly the PCs press on their return journey.

Once the townsfolk discover the PCs accomplishment, Monetenapoleone erupts with excitement. The PCs may have to keep the crowds from harming Gornalunga. Everyone, including the clerics, gather to hear the PCs' story and what they plan to do next. Heartened by the PCs' initial victory, they are eager to help in any way they can.

A glass jar on Vittorio's desk contains a cloth soaked with a sedative that Vittorio suggests using on Gornalunga if he is with the PCs. It keeps her in a calm state as long as the PCs administer it regularly.

Reversing the Curse

At 8:00 P.M. on the eighth day since the PCs arrived, the day on which Nora and Gornalunga are due to give birth, the PCs must begin the procedure to reverse Nora's curse.

Nora and Gornalunga must be laid close to one another. A 6th-level priest (at least) must then cast *detect evil* on Nora, *detect good* on Gornalunga, then either a modified *bless* spell or a modified *aid* spell. The modification can be made automatically by the priest casting it; the change is simply that the spell must be maintained through a low chant and concentration for the remainder of the time before the birth, which occurs at midnight.

If this procedure proceeds uninterrupted, the two babies are magically returned to their natural wombs moments before birth. The two mothers give birth normally, and the hag child attempts to escape. Giving birth to her own child does not harm Gornalunga.

If Vittorio is alive, he insists on performing the procedure himself. If Vittorio is dead, a PC priest can take advantage of the excitement of all the townsfolk and convince Racalmito and the other seven clerics to *combine* and help the PC (since the procedure does require a 6th-level priest). If the PC is 3rd-level, Racalmito provides him with a scroll inscribed with *combine*. If the PC is 2nd-level, Racalmito provides a second scroll inscribed with *bless*, but then does not take part in the *combine* spell, since the PC must preside over the procedure and cast the necessary spells.

As long as the PC leading the procedure and a total of six clerical levels remain combined and undisturbed, the process may continue. If the PC leading the procedure is disturbed for more than 1 round, or if the circle ever drops below six levels, the procedure is broken and cannot be reinstated.

Trieste Intervenes

If the PCs destroyed Trieste's mirror, the night hag cannot do anything.

If the PCs did not destroy the mirror, however, Trieste discovers Gornalunga's disappearance, tracks down her location, and sends an attack force to rescue the hag and the treasure in her womb. Trieste times the attack force to arrive at the inn at 11:30 P.M., half an hour before the end of the procedure.

The attack force *gates* in through the mirror from Hades. If PCs brought the mirror home, the force springs through the mirror at the right moment and may surprise the PCs. If the PCs left the mirror in Gornalunga's lair, the attack force gates in with enough time to hurry to the location of the procedure and arrive there at 11:30 P.M., though they will make so much noise breaking in that the PCs have a moment to prepare.

The attack force tries simply to grab Gornalunga, killing any humans who get in the way. Once a member of the force reaches the mirror with Gornalunga, it can *gate* back to Hades with her. The members of the attack force fight to the death, knowing that, if they do not return with the hag, they face death as punishment.

The attack force consists of three hordlings:

Hordling: INT low; AL NE; AC 3; MV 6; HD 6+3; hp 24; THAC0 15; #AT 4 arms; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d4/1d4; SZ M; ML 7; XP 1,750; *MC8* or *PLANESCAPE™ MC*/54.

This hordling is crab-like but lacks pincers. It can spring 20′ in any direction. It attempts to grab Gornalunga then leap back into the mirror. If prevented from reaching the hag, it attacks any who get in the way.

Hordling: INT low; AL NE; AC 3; MV 6; HD 6+3; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 2 arms, 1 bite; Dmg 1d4+2/1d4+2/2d4; SZ M; ML 7; XP 2,000.

This hordling resembles a powerful humanoid with chitinous skin, sharp claws, and large protruding tusks. It has no strategy and just attacks.

Hordling: INT low; AL NE; AC 0; MV 6; HD 9; hp 55; THAC0 11; #AT 1 bite; Dmg 1d4+2; SZ L; MR 30%; ML 7; XP 2,250.

This hordling resembles a small fomorian giant with extremely underdeveloped arms. It has no strategy and simply attacks furiously.

If the hordlings do grab Gornalunga but must make it all the way back to the abbey to *gate* back to Hades, the

PCs have an opportunity to chase them down, though the procedure is ruined.

If Trieste's mirror remains in Monetenapoleone, and a PC smashes it while the hordlings are still on the Prime Material Plane, the *gate* is destroyed, trapping them. They fly into a rampage, attacking every living being in sight with abandon.

One mother or another, the hag's child will make an appearance:

Greenhag Newborn: INT low; AL NE; AC 4; MV 12, swim 12; HD 3; hp 10; THAC0 18; #AT 2; Dmg 1d2/1d2; SA infravision 30′; SZ S; ML 7; XP 100.

The newborn automatically kills its human mother during birth, then tries to escape into the forest and make its way to the nearest swamp. It is self-sufficient at birth and will mature in about 5 years, hunting animals and developing abilities during that time.

Should the procedure fail, the PCs may have to deal with the larva:

Immature Enhanced Larva: INT low; AC 7; MV 3; HD 1–1; hp 1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SZ S; ML 2; XP 25; (*MC5,* larva modified). The enhanced larva reaches full growth within a week. The larva is truly a larva, not just a transformed human child. Not even a *wish* has remedial effect.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs successfully reverse the curse, they must decide what to do with Gornalunga. Lawful good PCs, and certainly the entire town, probably would like to see the hag justly put to death. The PCs may also have to deal with the hag child, hunting it down if it escaped into the forest. If they do not catch it quickly, it flees the area altogether.

In the unlikely event that Randazzo, Dalmazzo, and Tolmezzo remain uninvolved with the PCs until the party suddenly comes marching into town with Gornalunga, the two ogres flee into the wilderness to join their kind. They are quickly killed by the other ogres due to their polymorphed condition. Randazzo is totally confused (he was taking orders from what he thought was an ogre) and tries to lay low.

Vittorio, if he is still alive, remains at the monastery for a few days to heal from his ordeal, continue some research, and record the discoveries of the past week. He wants to pick the PCs over for all information they have about the Abbey of Pietrasanta and creatures they found there. Racalmito also wants to hear news of the condition of the abbey.

Nora names her child after a PC.

Once Gornalunga is removed from the abbey, the swamp begins to dry up. After two years, the trade route can be reopened. After a decade, the landscape returns to normal.

There are many displaced ogres in the area with a sudden power vacuum. They may band together, choose leaders, and attempt to overrun Monetenapoleone.

On the other hand, if the PCs fail to reverse the curse, and Gornalunga is rescued and taken back to Hades, Trieste returns her to the abbey to try to squeeze a few more larvae from the people before vacating the area. Having been unmasked, Gornalunga and Trieste are no longer concerned with secrecy and managing their hosts—they simply try to kidnap the remaining population of Monetenapoleone and use them to produce several larvae in the crypts below the abbey. The PCs might be able to defend the town from the onslaught of ogres. If the PCs succeed, Gornalunga abandons the area. Regardless, Gornalunga holds a bitter grudge against the PCs.

Should the PCs fail completely, Gornalunga tries to snuff them out before they cause more trouble. Ω

WEDDING DAY

BY PAUL F. CULOTTA

For better or for worse

Artwork by James Holloway

Paul has participated in many weddings (as groom, best man, father of the bride, usher, spectator, etc.) and has seen plenty of odd things occur before, during, and after the ceremony. All those crazy anecdotes (plus a dash of imagination) produced this adventure.

"Wedding Day" is a light-hearted AD&D® game adventure for 4–8 PCs of level 1 or 2 (about 10 levels total). The scenario can also work well for a single PC of level 4 or 5. A wizard character with the spellcraft nonweapon proficiency can help the party's mission considerably, but observant PCs can succeed as well. The adventure's setting is any medium or large city of the DM's choosing. This place should have several wealthy merchant families within the population. The adventure presumes the use of the optional rule on spell components.

Starting the Adventure

A young man (Romalus Magnum) and woman (Esther Borelia) from two of the wealthy merchant families of the city are to be married. One of the PCs is a close friend or relative of the bride or groom and has been asked to be a member of the wedding party (best man, maid of honor, usher, and so on). The other PCs are guests. The action begins at a party on the Borelia estate the night before the wedding.

It is the night before the wedding of Esther and Romalus, heirs to two of the most powerful merchant families in the city. You have just finished a tremendous feast of roast ox, spitted pig, and stuffed fowl, accompanied by the finest of wines and the music of the most talented of musical troupes. After the last toast and speech, the guests begin to depart, but Lombard Borelia, father of the bride, asks you to join him in his lavish study.

Once you are comfortable, he says, "Thank you for your time. I am afraid we may have a problem tomorrow, and I hope you can help us.

"Before Esther met Romalus, she was seeing a rogue named Elmo Bunster, apprentice to a wizard here in the city. I never did trust Bunster. He was a moody fellow, and Esther complained that he acted quite jealously on many occasions. I can't tell you how relieved her mother and I were when she stopped seeing him.

"I have many, um, sources of information, and one of them has told me that Elmo plans to do something embarrassing tomorrow at the wedding. I have tried to locate Elmo, but to no avail. He no longer stays at the wizard's tower, where he was apprenticed. From what I could learn, he seems to have disappeared into the slums where he grew up,

"And so, I need your help. This rogue does not know you, and I think you could probably forestall whatever he has planned. I don't think he would do anything truly harmful to Esther or Romalus, but I don't doubt he will do his best to humiliate them and make our families the laughing-stocks of the city. I would be most grateful if you would provide security for my daughter and future son-in-law tomorrow."

As friends of one or both families—and after being treated to one of the best meals in their lives—the PCs should readily agree. If they insist on remuneration, Lombard arches an eyebrow and remarks, "Hmm, I thought you were friends. Very well, if all goes without mishap, I shall pay you each 50 gold pieces."

If the PCs haggle, Lombard, who is now irritated with himself for misjudging their characters, grudgingly offers 75 gp per PC, but that is it.

Lombard: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger).

Lombard is a proud, wealthy merchant who deals in a variety of goods. He is slow to anger but, once aroused, becomes imperious and grows red in the face. Esther is his only child, and Lombard wants nothing but the best for her. Lombard is 6'1" tall, weighs 220 lbs., and sports a well-trimmed beard that is now beginning to show flecks of gray. He always dresses in the finest of clothes and jewelry.

However the negotiations for guarding the wedding turn out, Lombard insists that PCs dress appropriately for the occasion. This means no armor, no shields, nor any weapon larger than a ceremonial dagger showing. It also means that the characters are dressed in their finest clothing. This is an absolute condition, although a clever PC may, of course, conceal additional small weapons on his person (stiletto, darts, dagger, etc).

The Tricksters

Elmo Bunster is a handsome, 25-year-old man with chestnut hair, green eyes, and an engaging smile. He has a well-formed chin and cheekbones. He stands at 5'7" tall and weighs 140 lbs.

Usually, Elmo wears a light green robe with a brown belt. His soft leather boots are also brown, as is his beret, which is decorated with a single owl feather. He keeps a dagger concealed in his left boot.

Elmo is a fast-talking rogue who grew up as an orphan in the slums of the city. When he reached his late teens, he convinced the wizard Tambrel to make him an apprentice. Elmo enjoyed learning from the great mage, although he never reached the point where Tambrel would teach him any truly dangerous spells.

One day Elmo met Esther Borelia, the beautiful daughter of a wealthy member of the merchant's guild. For several weeks, he wooed her relentlessly. In the end, Esther called off the relationship. For one thing, Elmo seemed too involved in his studies and himself. For another, he was very, very jealous any time another man showed any friendship to Esther. Finally, Esther's father knew of Elmo's background and strongly disapproved of him.

Crushed by Esther's rejection, Elmo retreated to his old hangout, where he commiserated over many mugs of ale with members of his old gang. A few days later, he showed up at Tambrel's tower, but the mage dismissed him for being so irresponsible. Elmo pleaded for forgiveness, but the wizard ordered him to pack his things and leave. Elmo obeyed, but he stole a *ring of spell storing* before he left.

A few months later, Esther fell in love with Romalus Magnum, the dashing nephew of another wealthy merchant of the city. The courtship was but a few weeks long before their engagement was formally announced.

Elmo was flabbergasted at the news. He blamed all of his misfortunes on Romalus and swore revenge. The power of the two merchant families was great, however, and Elmo had already lost much. There was no sense in sticking his head in the hangman's noose. Since that cursed Tambrel had not taught him anything truly dangerous, Elmo thought it would be enough if the wedding were embarrassing to everyone concerned.

Elmo Bunster: AL N; AC 8; MV 12; W3/T2; hp 15; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger) or 1d4+1 sling bullet; S 10, D 16, C 15, I 17, W 10, Ch 14; ML 12; XP: 975; PP 30%; OL 25%; FRT 10%; MS 50%; HS 40%; DN 40%; CW 70%; RL 0%; sling with five bullets; dagger, *ring of spell storing* (stores five 1st-level spells, currently *change self* (×2), *dancing lights, unravel,* and *cantrip*), 25 gp.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: reading/writing, disguise, etiquette, gaming, riding—land based (horse), herbalism

Spells: *alarm, armor, audible glamer*, cantrip, change self, dancing lights, phantasmal force, unravel, ventriloquism*; alter self, bind, irritation*, levitate, magic mouth* (*memorized)

Elmo's Friends

Jak: AL CN; AC 7; MV 12; T2; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA backstabs for ×2 damage; PP 50%; OL 10%; FT 5%; MS 20%; HS 45%; DN 20%; CW 70%; RL 0%; S 12; D 15; C 13, I 15, W 12, Ch 11; ML 13; XP 120; leather armor, dagger, sling, 3 gp, 5 sp.

Jak is an outgoing, affable thief who smiles widely as he sticks his hand in his victim's pocket. He has bright red hair and merry green eyes. Jak is 5'9" tall and has a medium build.

Jeckle: AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; T2; hp 10; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA backstabs for ×2 damage; PP 25%; OL 25%; FT 40%; MS 15%; HS 20%; DN 20%; CW 75%; RL 10%; S 13, D 17, C 15, I 13, W 11, Ch 14; ML 13; XP 120; leather armor, short sword, sling, 5 gp, 17 sp.

Jeckle is a cold, moody burglar who aspires to be the wealthiest guildmaster in history, and he is going along with Elmo's scheme in the hope that one day Elmo will be a powerful mage ally. Standing at 5'6" tall and 128 lbs., he has beady dark brown (nearly black) eyes that match his hair color.

Mack: AL N; AC 5; MV 12; T2; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA backstabs for ×2 damage; PP 40%; OL 25%; FRT 15%; MS 40%; HS 20%; DN 20%; CW 85%; RL 0%; S 11, D 18, C 9, I 14, W 9, Ch 15; ML 13; XP 120; leather armor, sling, dagger, pouch with 1 gp and 15 sp.

Mack is a childhood friend of Elmo and wants to help his old comrade. He is lithe, standing at 5'11" tall and weighing 150 pounds. Mack has dark brown hair, and his eyes are a bright hazel.

Wedding Schedule

10:30 A.M.	*Esther and her parents depart the Borelia estate via carriage for the temple. Travel time: 15 minutes.*
10:45 A.M.	*Esther arrives and uses the temple library to change into her wedding gown, assisted by bridesmaids, who also change into their dresses.*
11:15 A.M.	*Romalus and his uncle, Tio Magnum, depart via carriage for the temple. Travel time: 30 minutes.*
11:45 A.M.	*Romalus arrives at the temple.*
Noon	*Wedding ceremony commences.*
12:30 A.M.	*Wedding ends. Wedding party and guests depart for Roasted Goose Inn for wedding feast.*
1:00 P.M.	*Wedding feast starts.*
2:00 P.M.	*Dancing starts.*
3:00 P.M.	*Wedding cake cut.*
4:30 P.M.	*Bride and groom depart on honeymoon.*

For the Dungeon Master

Lombard's fears are well founded. Elmo is indeed still jealous and plans to ruin the wedding. (See "The Tricksters" on page 53). He has enlisted the aid of three thief friends to help him wreak this havoc. They have made discreet inquiries to learn the schedule of the wedding, and they come out of their hiding place in the slums the morning of the wedding.

The PCs can try looking for Elmo and his friends on the night before the wedding. After the long festivities, however, those staying up late risk exhausting themselves before the wedding day itself. For each three hours that the PCs search, each must make a Constitution check. Failure indicates that any reactions, saving throws, proficiency checks, ability checks, etc., on the following day suffer a –2 penalty. Regardless of the PCs' efforts, the search is fruitless. Most people in the slums do not know where Elmo or his friends are hiding, and the few who know do not say.

PCs may also try to find out something from Elmo's former master, the wizard Tambrel. He lives in a lonely tower a few miles out of town. Tambrel is gone on an adventure, but his housekeeper, Mustafa, is at home. Mustafa is rather cranky about being awakened at a late hour, but if the PCs inquire about Elmo, Mustafa becomes agitated and quite talkative.

> "That worthless hindquarter of a camel! Hah! My master swore that upon his return he would transform Elmo Bunster into a beakless stirge. That thieving scoundrel stole one of Tambrel's rings."

Mustafa does not know which ring was stolen, and he has no further information for the PCs.

PCs may wish to plot their strategy for providing security for the wedding. If they ask Lombard for a schedule, he writes one out for them. The DM can copy the handout on page 55 and show it to the players.

The Wedding Day

On the morning of the wedding, Elmo and his friends take off to pull their dirty tricks. The DM should keep track of where the PCs are (they could easily decide to split up) and what they are doing. Also, certain events may be delayed for any number of reasons. If a dirty trick is supposed to take place with an event at a certain time, and the event has been delayed, Elmo and his friends wait for the event to occur. Once Elmo is apprehended (not an easy task), Lombard calls for the authorities, who take the rogue to jail. Elmo's friends do not risk their necks further once Elmo is caught, and the DM should conclude the adventure.

While the players should always have the feeling that they have a chance to catch Elmo and his cronies, the DM should strive to make the adventure last as long as the players are having fun. Thus, it is perfectly all right to fudge die rolls or allow the villains to escape automatically in some situations. Ultimately, however, the PCs should have a fair shot at stopping the tricksters before they ruin the entire wedding day.

Peeping Toms (10:30 A.M.)

Elmo and Jak enter the temple basement via the secret door (See Temple Map). The thieves guild of the city built the secret door to keep track of what the clerics were up to, but today the tricksters use it to gain unseen access to the temple. Elmo uses a ladder to peek into the library via a peephole.

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Here Comes the Bride (10:45 A.M.)

Esther and her parents arrive. She and her mother go into the library with the other bridesmaids who have been arriving steadily. In the narthex, Lombard exchanges pleasantries with the PCs or, if they are busy elsewhere, chats with the head cleric, Father Balato, who officiates the wedding.

Undressing Gertruda (11 A.M.)

Through his peephole, Elmo can get a good view only of Gertruda, one of the larger bridesmaids. He casts an *unravel* spell (see sidebar for description) on her dress, causing it to split down the seam. Gertruda cries out in anguish and starts blubbering, with tear-smeared kohl and rouge running down her face. Elmo and Jak flee back out the secret door as soon as the damage is done.

PCs in the area are asked to help out. A PC with a seamstress/tailor nonweapon proficiency or secondary skill can assist if he has a needle and thread handy. A wizard PC with a memorized *mending* spell also can save the day. If none of these options is possible, Lombard tells a PC to run three blocks away to fetch Mistress Charla the seamstress from her shop. Charla demands 5 gp for the inconvenience.

Suspicious PCs may investigate the temple basement and find the secret door (normal chances to detect). Pursuit in the filthy sewers is fruitless, and the wedding day clothes of any who travel through the muck become smelly and soiled. Being in this condition prevents their presence in the temple or at the wedding feast unless they clean up and procure new clothes.

The Runaway Carriage (11:15 A.M.)

Elmo and Jak reach a safe place, clean themselves off, and change into fine clothes. Elmo uses his disguise proficiency to look like a woman. He wears a long dress, woolen shawl, wig, makeup, and lipstick.

Meanwhile, the other two thieves, Mack and Jeckel, are in a different part of the city. They are on a rooftop directly across from the entrance to the Magnum estate, where they wait to ambush the groom's carriage. When it comes out, they pop up and shoot rocks from their slings at the horse. Hit in the rump, the horse panics and gallops away madly, throwing the driver into the street. Romalus and his uncle, Tio Magnum, are thrown together in their seats and knocked silly. Once the horse takes off, Mack and Jeckel flee the scene of the crime.

PCs who are in or near the carriage and who are not surprised have a chance to jump on the horse, grab the reins, or do something else to stop the runaway carriage. After the first round, only mounted PCs, PCs in the carriage, or PCs with a running proficiency have a chance to do something. A PC with an animal handling proficiency may check to see if he can stop the frightened beast. PCs without this proficiency have only a 20% chance of doing so (+1% for each strength point over 14). The DM should allow any other well-considered plan of the PCs to work also.

After five rounds, the horse careens around a corner, smashing the carriage into a building. Romalus and Tio (both 0-level humans with 5 hp each) fall out, and each suffers 1–4 hp damage—plus their clothes are ruined. After curing these two, getting them back to the mansion to get new clothes, sorting out damages caused by the carriage (35 gp total), etc., the ceremony is delayed by 30 minutes. If no characters have spells or healing abilities, they can patch the cuts of Romalus and his uncle until they get to the temple, where Father Balato casts *cure light wounds* spells on them.

"Friend" of the Bride (11:50 A.M.)

Jak arrives at the temple and is seated in the western pews (shown by a **J** on the map). He is dressed as a courtier. The DM should note that although invitations were sent out to people, the wedding is a public one and guests are not expected to show an invitation. If PCs insist on seeing invitations, Lombard corrects them after several legitimate guests (without their invitations) complain.

On the other hand, nothing prevents the PCs from having a member of each family standing by as guests enter to identify them. About 90% of the people (about 240) who come in are recognized as invitees. The other 25 or so people are not recognized, but this could be a good way for the PCs to cut down on the number of folks they are keeping an eye on. PCs specifically watching only those guests who the family do not recognize gain a +2 bonus to their checks to detect Elmo's disguise or his spellcasting (see later events).

New Spell

Unravel
1st-Level Alteration Spell
Range: 30 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: 1 Object
Saving Throw: None

This spell creates small breaks or tears in soft, flexible objects. It creates a hole in a leather pouch, a glove, or a wineskin. It can also make a tear along a seam line in someone's clothes, creating side-splitting results. Magical items are completely unaffected by this spell. The maximum volume of material the caster can unravel is one cubic foot per level.

The material component of this spell is a small pair of sewing scissors which must be worked with one hand while the spell is cast.

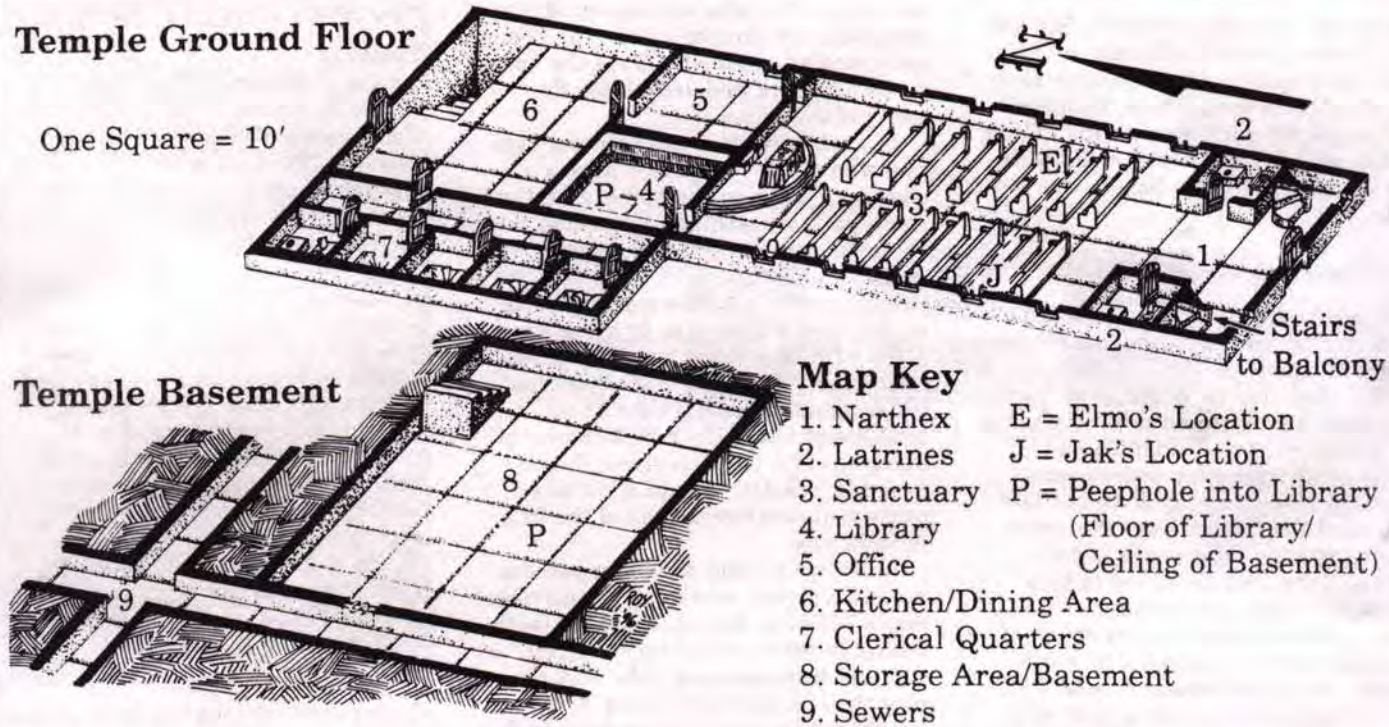
Quick Change (11:53 A.M.)

In a nearby alley, Elmo casts *change self* on himself to enhance his disguise, then he enters the temple. He is seated in the eastern pews (marked **E** on the map).

The Chorus (Noon)

The wedding starts with a procession down the aisle. Shortly after that, Lombard gives away his daughter, the radiant Esther. After he sits down, Ariel Mulhoon, a close friend of the bride, stands up and sings a beautiful solo about the eternity of love. A mandolin player and harpist provide the elegant music for this wonderful song. Just as she sits down, however, more singing is heard from outside the temple (on the western side). It sounds like four leather-lunged men singing and laughing with marbles in their throats:

(The DM may wish to sing this song to the tune of "My Country 'Tis of Thee," a.k.a. "God Save the Queen." Better yet, the DM may persuade the players to sing the song themselves.)



Here is the bride to be,
Losing her liberty,
Esther the dumb!
Long will she toil away,
While hair turns ever gray,
Tending his brats each day,
A worn out wife!

Oh and here comes the groom,
Brain like a mindless loon,
Poor Romalus!
He thinks he's got her heart,
And that he's very smart,
But Esther's a fickle tart,
We know this well!

Running outside to drive off the singers does no good, since there are none (the singing is from an *audible glamer* spell cast by Elmo). Everyone gasps in dismay at these horrid verses, and Lombard turns around and scowls furiously. During the singing, he motions the closest PC over and growls, "Now, curse it all! Find that trickster! He must be here somewhere!"

PCs may look carefully at people in the audience. They have a 5% chance (+1% for each point of Intelligence over 12) of seeing through Elmo's disguise. Those who have a disguise proficiency receive a 10% bonus. Any PC who makes a spellcraft proficiency check with an additional –1 penalty notices that a woman in the audience is now missing a piece of her woolen shawl (the component for *audible glamer*). Elmo kept his other hand under the shawl to conceal his somatic gestures.

If any PC figures out that the lady is really Elmo and starts heading that way, Jak starts coughing, signalling his friend that the jig is up. Elmo then jumps up and crashes through a window, causing a commotion. Whether he escapes depends on the placement of the PCs, their actions, etc. If he can get to an alley he uses his Hide in Shadows and Move Silently abilities to evade pursuers. Unless the PCs are especially quick and effective, the DM should do his utmost to let Elmo escape.

PCs might question Jak, but he professes his innocence and says that he just had a tickle in his throat. There is nothing on Jak's person to indicate he is involved, and Lombard orders him freed.

If Elmo is not discovered, Lombard grumbles to the cleric, "Father Balato, proceed. Some coward is trying to ruin this wedding, but we are going to ignore him."

Exchange of Vows (12:15 P.M.)

Proceeding with the ceremony, Father Balato asks Esther, "Do you Esther receive Romalus as your husband, your only true love, your best friend, and your closest confidant, as allowed by the laws of the realm and our deity? Do you promise to avoid temptation, despair, greed, dark magic, and all other evils to keep Romalus the only one in your heart forever and ever?"

The bride tries to reply, "I so swear it," but this response is drowned out by a *ventriloquism* spell by Elmo, who makes her appear to say loudly, "Romalus? Him? Never!"

Again the crowd gasps, and Esther is flustered and at a complete loss for words. Any PC who is at the altar in the wedding party should be allowed the opportunity to encourage her with the correct response. If a PC whispers a very clever suggestion (e.g., "I mean, never could I take anyone except my beloved Romalus as my husband."), the PC should receive bonus XP (10–50, depending on how clever the PC is).

If a PC does not suggest anything to her, Father Balato whispers the correct response, and Esther repeats it. The crowd breathes a sigh of relief and

Father Balato wipes his sweaty brow with a handkerchief. He then poses the same questions to Romalus.

This time, Elmo has Romalus say "This witch? No way!"

After the crowd groans and Father Balato turns pale, Romalus likewise chokes up and turns beet red with embarrassment. Again, a PC in the wedding party could earn bonus XP for suggesting a clever response (e.g., "That is, no way could I resist my darling's bewitchments! Of course I do take her. How could I not?"). After a few, tortured seconds, Romalus recovers anyway and snarls out, "I so swear it." Father Balato rolls his eyes and looks upward as if praying for divine intervention.

At any point, PCs can discover the perpetrator of these false lines by one of three ways: seeing through the disguise (covered above); making a successful spellcraft check (in this instance, the PC has seen the "lady in the shawl" holding a parchment rolled like a cone—the material component for *ventriloquism*—one moment, and it disappearing the next; or making a save vs. spell at a –2 penalty. The DM must remember that any attempt to apprehend Elmo causes Jak to give his warning coughs.

Uninvited Guest (12:20 p.m.)

If Elmo has not been caught yet, he is terribly frustrated by the tenacity of the bride and groom. He now casts *dancing lights* from his *ring of spell storing* to create a glowing figure. He has it appear at the entrance to the sanctuary, and he then uses the rest of his *ventriloquism* spell (it lasts a total of 7 rounds) to have it appear to utter: "I hope you did not expect to keep him long, lady! Hahahahaha!" With that, he controls the shape to move toward the bride and groom.

The appearance of this image causes absolute pandemonium. People scream ("Aiee! It's a fiend!") and scramble over each other to get away from the aisle. As the "fiend" makes its way to the front, people crowd out the back door, and many others break through the windows to escape. Elmo is among the last to leave, maintaining control over the fiery image.

Father Balato presents his holy symbol and shouts out bravely, "Back to whence you came, monster from the Abyss!" Elmo causes it laugh. He also has it laugh if PCs try to stab it (their weapons pass right through the "body") or throw holy water at it. Esther faints as it draws near, and Romalus bravely tries to protect her by swinging a silver candlestick at it, thus disappointing Elmo's hope that he would flee like a coward.

After six rounds the spell expires, and it takes a few moments to revive Esther and finally end the ceremony amidst the wreckage of the temple. Lombard is not happy, and he snarls that perhaps he should have gotten more experienced guards. On the other hand, if a PC appeared to land a "killing blow" on the "fiend" just as the spell expired, Lombard thanks that PC profusely for having saved his daughter and son-in-law.

After all this, the temple is a shambles, requiring 75 gp worth of repairs, and Lombard pays for the damages. Then he hires ten criers to go through town to let the guests know that the fiend fled (or was destroyed). The criers also announce that the feast will start one hour later than scheduled. The criers cost Lombard 2 gp.

Tainted Wine (1:15 p.m.)

If the PCs have caught Elmo Bunster prior to the wedding feast at the Roasted Goose Inn, they are cheered and toasted by all present.

If not, Elmo tries again to mess things up. He shows up with dyed hair (now blonde) and a fake blonde moustache. Just before entering, he casts his second *change self* spell to make his eyes look blue and his height about six inches shorter. If PCs rigorously check each and every person who enters the feasting hall, Elmo tries to sneak in the back door of the inn and come through the kitchen. If foiled by the PCs, he goes across the street from the inn and climbs the rooftop there to join his companions.

Once inside, Bunster casts *cantrip* to make Lombard's cup of wine taste like salted vinegar. This causes Lombard to become angry and demand that the innkeeper provide the high quality wine that was ordered. Ronpar Billows, the halfling proprietor, is distressed at the accusation and personally tastes the wine. Of course Elmo alters the *cantrip* so that it tastes good, and the proud halfling proprietor tells Lombard so. Lombard tries it again (Elmo reinstates the bad taste) and nearly gags, spitting it out and calling it the worst swill he has ever put in his mouth. Ronpar stamps his hairy foot and proclaims that he does not need this type of abuse, demanding that everyone leave right now!

Again, PCs (who should be very suspicious by now) have the same chances of seeing through Elmo's disguise as they had in the temple (they have a –5% chance if they look for the woman who wore the shawl but a +5% chance if they look for someone that was not in the temple). They should be able to encircle and capture him if they notice.

Assuming they do not, there is still the Lombard-Ronpar dispute going on, and the PCs must do something to defuse that situation. The DM should allow them to resolve this through role-playing and cleverness. They should be astute enough to convince the disputants that this is another magical gag. Once they do so, Ronpar calms down, as does Lombard. Another possibility is that a PC mage might use *charm person* or *friends* to help calm the merchant and halfling.

Shall We Dance? (2:00 p.m.)

After everyone has finished eating, a six-piece ensemble sets up and starts to play merry dance music. Everyone is having a good time, until there is a sudden scream from Esther on the dance floor. A nasty red, itchy rash has broken out all over Romalus' skin (caused by Elmo's *irritation* spell), and he looks a fright. PCs who were looking at the crowd have the normal chances of noticing the disguise. Those PCs with a successful spellcraft proficiency check notice that one of the guests was toying with a sprig of three leaves (poison ivy), which is now gone.

If the adventuring party includes a paladin, he will be a hero if he uses his cure disease ability on Romalus. If there is no paladin, Father Balato takes Romalus to a back room and casts a *cure disease* spell, removing the itchy rash, saving the day (and the honeymoon).

Cutting the Cake (3:00 p.m.)

At some point, Elmo sneaks over to the cake on the pretense of admiring it. It is a tall, three-level, white frosted cake with a knight and lady figure at the top. The trickster has in his pocket a

packet of blanched powdered herbs which he surreptitiously shakes on the cake. They blend nicely into the cake's white icing. These are the leaves of a rare plant that causes the ingestor to sleep like a stone for 48 hours. Elmo identified and prepared this concoction using his herbalism proficiency. If the PCs are not keeping a watch on the cake, each character has only his normal chance of seeing through the disguise. Those keeping a sharp eye on the cake automatically spot a guest sneakily sprinkling white powder on it.

Failure to detect this latest trick results in Romalus and Esther cutting the cake and then carrying out that grand old tradition of feeding the first piece to each other. Just as the crowd finishes its applause, the bride and groom turn pale and collapse to the floor. Lombard rushes to his daughter's side, very frightened at this turn of events.

The cleric looks the couple over and states that they have been drugged. Lombard is furious, proclaiming this the last straw! Just as he is in the process of upbraiding the PCs for doing such a miserable job of providing security, an alert 11-year-old girl tugs on a PC's jacket and points at Elmo, who is slowly making his way to the exit.

She says, "You know, I saw that man putting more sugar on the cake. Maybe he did it."

This is the last chance that the PCs have at catching Elmo. If he makes it outside, Mack and Jeckel cover his escape by firing sling stones at pursuers from their spot on the opposite rooftop. They have 50% cover. What makes matters worse is that Elmo's companions have told 15 smelly beggars about the reception, and they are gathered outside to beg what they can as rich guests come out. The beggars have been paid 1 cp each to let "a blonde man with a moustache" through their ranks, but to delay anyone else by grabbing at their hands and clothes while making pitiful pleas for alms. Each beggar has 2 hp and is AC 10. They do not defend themselves but hold up their arms and plea for mercy. If a PC starts stabbing helpless beggars in a berserk manner, the DM seriously should consider an alignment change for that PC. Forcing oneself through the beggars takes three successful Strength and Dexterity checks. A *sleep* or *color spray* spell automatically clears a path through them, but pursuing PCs must make one Dexterity check to get by the bodies. Throwing a handful of coins off to the side causes the beggars to scuttle eagerly after them, and the way is clear without ability checks or penalties.

At the corner is a hay wagon driven by Jak. Elmo runs out of sight to the opposite side of the wagon, jumps on and buries himself into the hay. By the time a delayed PC gets to the wagon, the red-headed Jak points to an alley in the next block and loudly exclaims, "He went down there!" If the heroes look as though they will fall for this ruse, allow each PC one chance to recognize Jak, who was in the congregation at the wedding ceremony (save vs. paralyzation with a +1 bonus for each point of Wisdom over 10).

Once the PCs are at the alley (or if they begin to act suspicious), Jak whips the two horses pulling the wagon and tries to escape with a race through town. Clever use of *phantasmal force* or similar spells by a PC could cause the horses to rear up or crash the wagon. A

devious DM could also have Elmo escape by crawling through the hay and jumping out the other side if they overtake the wagon. While the possibilities for the chase are many, the DM should strive to make it as exciting and challenging as possible for the PCs.

Once they return to the inn, Lombard is extremely grateful that the PCs caught Elmo (if they did), but he is disappointed that the bridal couple's wedding cake is ruined. He sends off for a substitute cake, which is not nearly as nicely decorated, and it costs him 10 gp. A cleric PC can avoid this expense by casting *purify food and drink* on the original cake.

The Departure (4:30 P.M.)

This situation should occur only if Elmo was not able to infiltrate the party at the Roasted Goose Inn. In this event, the feasting, cake-cutting, and other festivities go off without a hitch, but, as soon as the bride and groom get in the carriage to leave for their honeymoon, Elmo and friends rise from the opposite rooftop and sling stones at the horse, causing the same problem that happened earlier with Romalus and his uncle. It should be adjudicated the same way except that the beggars are in the way, making their pleas for spare change.

The PCs might want to chase Elmo and company, and the DM can devise a chase scene with the hay wagon as suggested above.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs do not prevent Elmo's escape, Elmo leaves town the next evening, gloating over his successes. The characters find their reputations as resourceful adventurers ruined, and they must go somewhere else to find glory and riches.

If they apprehend the rascal, Lombard calls for the town watch, who take Elmo off to the local lord's dungeon on a charge of disturbing the peace. Jak, Mack, and Jeckel disappear into the slums if they have not been captured with Elmo. Whatever wedding day activities have not occurred thus far now proceed without a hitch.

Lombard, for all his earlier growling and grousing, is very pleased that the PCs apprehended the miscreant, and he rewards them appropriately. If the PCs did not ask for remuneration, he gives them each 125 gp less the amount he had to pay for damages caused by Elmo's mischief. (See sidebar.) If they did ask for pay, he gives them the bargained amount.

Potential Deductions from Reward

Fixing Gertruda's Dress:	5 gp
Runaway Carriage Damage:	35 gp
Temple Repairs:	75 gp
Criers:	2 gp
Substitute Wedding Cake:	10 gp

Any other damage caused by Elmo, such as knocking over a table of food at the reception while escaping, must have a price placed on it by the DM. The PCs' reward is adjusted accordingly by Lombard (who foots the bill).

PCs who capture Elmo should each receive 500 XP as a story award. The DM should also give generous bonuses for exceptional role-playing and problem-solving. Further, the party should divide XP for any of the three thieves that are captured.

In the end, Elmo is given a summary trial by the local lord and sentenced to 30 days in the public stocks where everyone comes to throw rotten vegetables and insults at him. He is also fined 300 gp, and—since he has only 25 gp on his person—his equipment is publicly auctioned off (DM note: this does not include his spellbook, which is carefully hidden in the slums). His ring is a silver band with a copper jester's mask welded on it. There are two other people who bid on the ring, and one drops out of the bidding at 50 gp, while the other goes as high as 225 gp. PCs who buy the ring find out it is a *ring of spell storing* that can store any five 1st-level spells per day. It takes a 6th-level or higher wizard to "load" the spells into the ring, which cannot be re-loaded until all of the spells in it are used.

Of course the PCs will be greatly disappointed if the great wizard Tambrel hears that they bought a ring that looks like the one that Elmo stole from him. The PCs may flee Tambrel's wrath, simply give it back to him, or bargain for knowledge (teaching a mage a new spell or two). All of these options provide hooks for future adventures.

Of course once Elmo is freed from the humiliating experience of the stocks, he will certainly want to get back at those who caught him. Ω

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Adventure

VOYAGE OF THE *CRIMPSHRINE*

BY TONY ROSS

Up the river

Artwork by C.H. Burnett

Tony writes: "After abandoning the AD&D® game for wargames and athletics, I was reintroduced to it by my college roommate, Chris Quinn. This adventure is dedicated to Chris, my wonderful girlfriend Meg, and our dog, Fred. Please write me with any comments about the adventure at 2745 29th Street NW #400, Washington, DC 20008.

"Voyage of the *Crimpshrine*" is intended for a party of 4–6 PCs of levels 3–5 (about 20 total levels). The adventure is set in the Kingdom of Karameikos in the MYSTARA® campaign world and refers to places from the *KARAMEIKOS™: Kingdom of Adventure* box set. While that set is useful, it is not necessary to run this adventure. The scenario can easily be adapted to any land with navigable rivers, and if so desired, gnomes can be replaced by another race.

As much of the action takes place in and around a river, the DM should carefully review the rules on pages 120–122 of the *PHB* on swimming, holding one's breath, diving, and surfacing. The rules on page 79 of the *DMG* concerning underwater movement, vision, light, combat, and magic are crucial. The use of the optional rules on specific encumbrance on pages 78–79 of the *PHB* is strongly recommended, as are the optional non-weapon proficiency rules. PCs will benefit by having the swimming nonweapon proficiency and magical items such as a *ring of free action* or *helm of underwater action.*

Adventure Background

Since the independence of Karameikos was declared in AC 1006, the gnomes of Clan Fiddleswithsticks in Highforge have been laboring, with the aid of several powerful members of the School of Magecraft in Krakatos, to build a vessel capable of navigating the rivers of Karameikos. The craft was intended to supplement and perhaps replace the annual Gnome Caravan as the way for the gnomish clans (and eventually all merchants) to distribute their raw and finished goods across the kingdom. After many discarded blueprints and prototypes, a viable design finally emerged. With financial backing from Clan Hilltopper and the Merchant's Guild of Mirros, a mighty riverboat named the *Crimpshrine* was built and put to the test. Over the last several months, the mighty behemoth has gone

up and down the riverways of Karameikos, carrying cargo and passengers with previously unthinkable speed.

Adventure Setup

The PCs, even if new to Karameikos, should be aware of the *Crimpshrine*, as news of it has spread throughout the Kingdom and even beyond. The *Crimpshrine* has rapidly become the transportation of choice for those who can afford to circumvent the rigors of road travel, and the carrier of choice for merchants who find it cheaper than caravans in many cases. At some point in their adventuring, the PCs will doubtless desire to travel aboard this vessel, if they haven't already, at which point this adventure begins.

It is best that the PCs have been aboard the *Crimpshrine* several times already and are accustomed to it as a part of the larger campaign setting. With minimal revision, DMs can set "The Sea Wolf" (*DUNGEON® Adventures* #55) on board the *Crimpshrine* as an introduction to the craft. If the PCs don't express a desire to try out the *Crimpshrine*, they can be lured aboard by any number of means: free passage, the need to get somewhere fast, as bodyguards for some important personage, etc. If the PCs resist all the DM's attempts to bring them aboard, then they aren't worthy of being called adventurers! The PCs should be on board the *Crimpshrine* as it embarks on a two-day trip to Seragrad, a small fortified frontier town situated where the Castellan River and Highreach River branch off from each other. Seragrad is often used as a base of operations for those seeking adventure in the wild, unmapped foothills of the region.

The Trip

On the first day the *Crimpshrine* departs Kelvin at exactly dawn (6 A.M.) and moves swiftly (averaging 4 mph) south down the Hillfollow River (which is known to the Traldar as the River Shutturgal), which is between 500 and 750′ across. The first hour of the voyage takes them past the well-tended lands of the Barony of Kelvin to the east and the rolling Highforge foothills to the west. After another hour, the *Crimpshrine* slows to pass under the drawbridge of the massive bridge linking the northern and southern segments of the King's Road. Half an hour later, the Windrush River (a.k.a. the Foamfire River) can be seen joining the Hillfollow directly to the West. At roughly 9 A.M. the *Crimpshrine* shudders and squeals as the ship's captain maneuvers the craft for the sharp turn to the northeast that will take the *Crimpshrine* up the Castellan River (a.k.a. River Volaga) to Seragrad. Until this point, the lands are cultivated and small settlements can be seen scattered along the shores. In these morning hours, many passengers have collapsed in their cabins to get some sleep or to get used to the riverboat's motion. Some people will be out on the decks enjoying the trip and PCs may be able to gossip about the latest news and rumors if they wish.

After turning into the current of the lesser Castellan River, the *Crimpshrine*'s progress is slowed to 3 mph. The well-tended woods of the Barony are to the south, and there are several small logging camps that are currently uninhabited on the banks there. On the northern banks, there are no settlements or cultivation of any kind. There are no bridges connecting the shores of the Castellan river, which is roughly 350′ across in most places. The *Crimpshrine* travels some 30 miles upriver over the course of the day, during which the PCs can explore the ship, gamble, fish, or do whatever they desire.

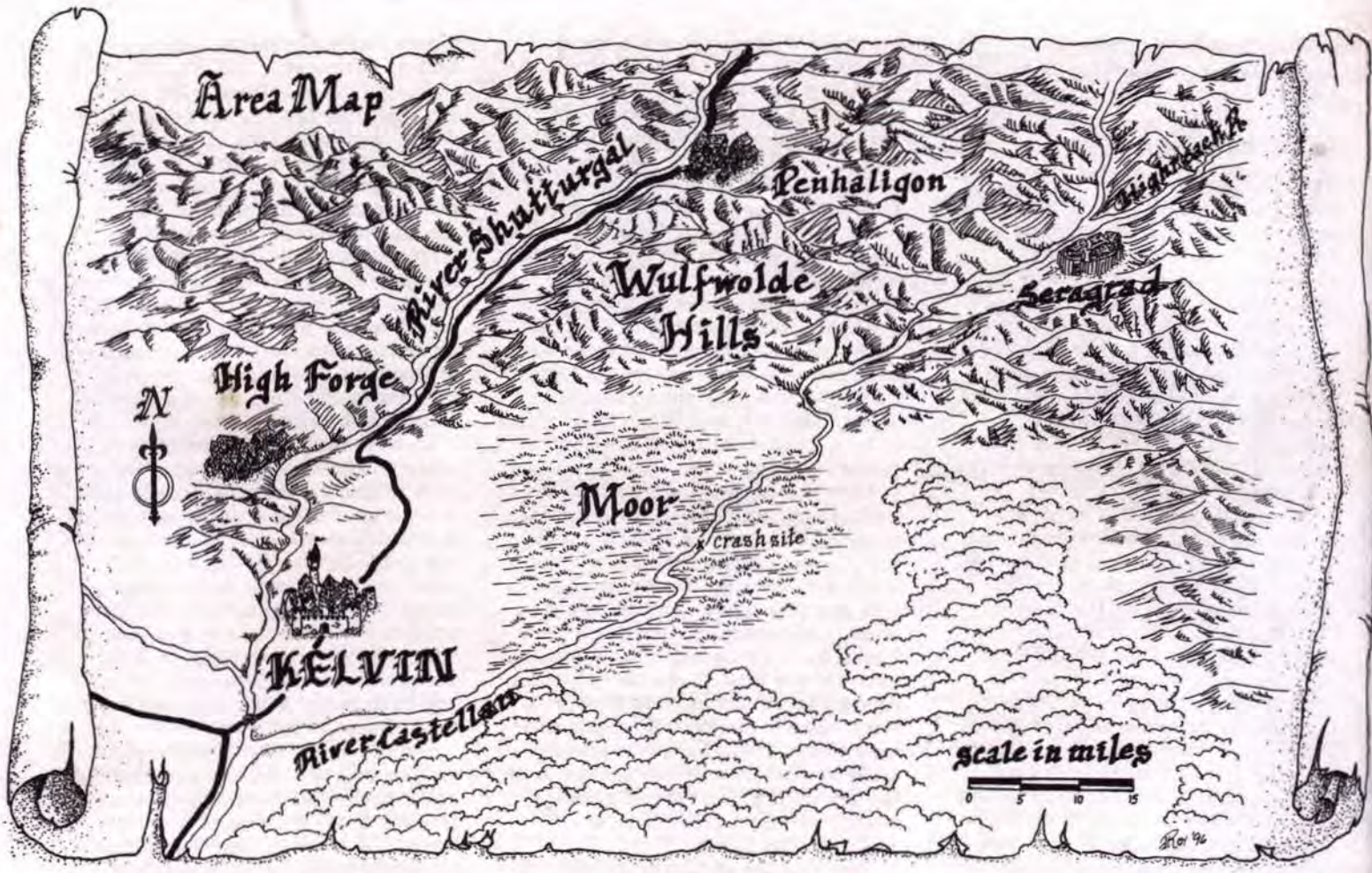
Note that the motion of the river disrupts any attempt to study or memorize spells unless the PC has the seamanship non-weapon proficiency. Normal reading requires a successful Constitution check each hour to avoid motion sickness. Any prosperous (or gullible) looking PCs are approached by Marsallus, who attempts to engage them in conversation about their past deeds. His goal is to learn enough about the PC to decide if he or she is worth pursuing as a mark for one of his cons at some point. These idle hours are ideal for the DM who wishes to introduce new rumors or NPCs to the campaign. The DM should be sure to establish what all the PCs are doing (as nonchalantly as possible!) because as dusk is falling at around 7 P.M., a catastrophe occurs.

The Wreck

A sawyer (a drifting log, bobbing vertically up and down in the water) pierces through the hull of the *Crimpshrine* directly below the juggernaut's track in area **A**. The construct is jarred off its track and smashes through the side of the hold with its harness still attached, destroying much of the intricate gearworks. The massive gash in the hold causes the boat to take water and begin to sink rapidly. The sailors on duty in the "engine" room quickly sound the alarm, alerting all passengers (except for those in the deepest slumber). When the *Crimpshrine* starts to sink, the PCs have 5 rounds to act before the boat is completely under the cold, dark water. In that time they may wish to rescue their possessions, get off the ship, or help with the evacuation.

Unless they have an inordinate amount of possessions, assume that each PC can gather up all of their clothing and gear and get off the boat before it sinks. Remember that books (including spellbooks), maps, and any other paper items will be ruined by submergence in water unless somehow waterproofed. Other items such as armor, composite bows, bowstrings, musical instruments and delicate equipment, will be damaged to varying degrees by the exposure to the water.

Getting off the boat is relatively simple; the PCs need only race to a railing and dive into the river to avoid being trapped inside the boat as it sinks. Some PCs, however, may wish to try to get in one of the few lifeboats. Two lifeboats are lowered to the bow and two to the aft. Due to the chaos on the deck of the boat, any PC trying to reach a lifeboat will have to spend 2 rounds getting there. At that point the DM should pass the player a note reading: "As the mighty *Crimpshrine* shudders beneath your feet, you rapidly realize that not everyone is going to make it off before it sinks. The rails are crowded with women, children and elderly passengers trying to make it to the lifeboats next to you." The PC should realize at this point that there are many who need the lifeboats far more than he. Any lawful or good aligned PC who elbows his way onto one of the lifeboats at this point should receive a severe experience point penalty for this action. Good and/or lawful PCs who help passengers into the lifeboats should receive 50 XP for every passenger they save. Up to four passengers can be transferred to each lifeboat each round. PCs who elect to aid passengers escape must make a



Dexterity check each round or they are knocked overboard by the surging crowd. Barring magical escape (*flying, levitating,* etc.), the PCs will likely end up in the river.

❖ PCs without the swimming nonweapon proficiency cannot swim to shore, but can only dog paddle in place and hope to be rescued. If any of these PCs are carrying enough weight (clothing, gear, etc.) to reduce their movement rate (See Table 48 on page 78 of the *PHB*) they will start sinking until they divest themselves of enough gear to become unencumbered (rules for shedding armor are on page 76 of the *PHB,* specific weights of various pieces of armor can be found on page 128 of *PLAYER'S OPTION™: Combat and Tactics*). PCs can maintain themselves above water for a number of hours equal to their Constitution (as per page 121 of the *PHB*), however, the leisurely current will carry them down river at 1.5 mph.

❖ PCs with the swimming nonweapon proficiency can easily make it to shore, which is only 100 yards away. It is possible for proficient swimmers to rescue non-proficient swimmers by locating them in the water and swimming to shore dragging them at 1/3 their normal swimming rate.

Any PC who does not make it off the *Crimpshrine* when it slips under is in serious jeopardy. PCs still on the *Crimpshrine* should roll for surprise, if unsurprised they can gulp enough air to hold their breath up to ⅓ their Constitution in rounds. If surprised, they can only gulp enough air to last a number of rounds equal to ⅙ their Constitution. The *Crimpshrine* sinks at a rate of 40′ per round before coming to rest some 150′ underwater. PCs on the deck must make a Dexterity check to get free from the ship each round, once free, they can surface as per the rules on page 122 of the *PHB.* PCs unfortunate enough to still be in a room may move at ½ their normal movement rate to get out to the decks, then must make a Dexterity check, as above. If a PC can no longer hold his breath and starts to inhale water, he passes out and must make a successful system shock check each round or die. Any PC with the healing nonweapon proficiency who can tend to a drowned PC within 5 rounds of death can revive the drowned PC to one hit point by making a proficiency check at a –5 penalty.

The DM can add an excellent hook for a future adventure by having an unknown, drowning passenger hand over a key/token/jewel/scrollcase or gurgles a message, asking a PC to deliver it to someone before slipping under the water to his death. A subsequent adventure can involve the PCs' investigation of this mysterious passenger and the item or message, then their attempt to deliver it to the person specified for a reward. The rest is up to the DM. Few adventurers, however, will pass up an opportunity to deliver a simple message for great reward.

The Aftermath

Assuming the PCs all escape the *Crimpshrine*'s demise more or less intact and manage to locate each other, they will find themselves amongst a group of shivering survivors somewhere in the middle of the feared, unnamed moor east of Kelvin. Of the 43 passengers and crew headed to Seragrad, 17 have survived the wreck. The DM should flesh out the survivors before running the adventure, including deciding which of the notable NPCs (see sidebar) survived. Table 70 of the *DMG* can be used to quickly generate some of the basic traits of the survivors. As might be expected, Captain Prominentus and much of the crew went down with the *Crimpshrine* trying to help passengers escape to safety and are missing. Thus, there are no "leaders" among the survivors... except the PCs. As hardy adventurers, the PCs are the natural candidates to lead the survivors to the safety of civilization. Depending on the range of their exploits in Karameikos, the PCs may even be known as heroes to some of the passengers. The survivors of the wreck are mostly a dispirited lot, most having lost friends or family in the devastating wreck, as well as valued possessions. Bonus experience points should be given to any priest or paladin PC who spends time comforting and consoling the survivors. The PCs should realize that without someone to take charge, many of these people might not reach safety before dying of exposure or despair. Thus the PCs are faced with the task of escorting a large group of defenseless civilians across the moor and to the safety of Kelvin. PCs who wish to travel on their own should be made aware of the helpless state of the survivors. Good-aligned PCs should have moral qualms about leaving the survivors to fend for themselves.

The wreck site is 30 miles east of Kelvin, in the middle of the great unnamed moor. There is only one obvious route back to Kelvin: due west across the moor. This route takes a minimum of eight days (moving at roughly four miles a day) as the group is slowed down by the few surviving gnomish crewmen as well as the young and elderly who are not used to or healthy enough, for prolonged marches. The riverbank cannot be followed with any safety due to the numerous sinkholes, bogs, and quicksand pits in the area within a mile of the river. If the PCs aren't aware of this, one of the survivors can tell them of these hazards. DMs should be prepared to improvise any other routes the PCs wish to follow.

A major difficulty the PCs face is getting lost. The DM should make a secret check once per day to see if the PCs become lost. The base chance for this is 50% due to the featurelessness of the moor. This chance is modified by –5% if one of the PCs has the direction sense nonweapon proficiency. If there is a PC who can levitate or fly, the group gets a 10% bonus for being able to spy distant landmarks and mark their position. Chances are good that the PCs will become lost, so the DM should be prepared to calculate how much longer the trek will be prolonged by such an error. Enough food and provisions wash ashore from the wreck to feed the entire group of survivors and the PCs for five days, if rationed. PCs with the hunting proficiency should be allowed to spend a good portion of each day trying to supplement the rations. Each day without food lowers Strength, Constitution, and Dexterity by 1 point, to a minimum value of 3.

Starting on the second night, the group of survivors is followed by a werewolf. He stays far behind the group, catching up to them each night, attempting to sneak into the camp to kill and drag away one of the small survivors (preferably a gnome or child). He continues this attempt once each night until he is seriously wounded or killed, or until the group is within two days of Kelvin. This predator may prove very difficult to thwart, depending on what gear the PCs lost in the wreck.

Werewolf: INT 9; AL CE; AC 5; MV 15; HD 4+3, hp 24; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SA surprise; SD +1 or silver weapon to hit; MR nil; SZ M; ML 12; XP 420; *MM*/240. The werewolf has been roaming the moors for several years since his farmstead was overrun by werewolves. In human form he is a surly, rugged Traldar huntsman named Pytor with no notable possessions.

On the sixth day, when the group has probably run out of food and stomachs are rumbling, they encounter a giant badger. This huge, furry fellow is one of the many oddities who wander the vast moor. If killed and properly dressed, he can provide enough meat to feed the entire group for two more days.

Giant Badger: INT non; AL N; AC 4; MV 12, Burrow 6; HD 6+6, hp 45; THAC0 14; #AT 3; Dmg 1–6/1–6/2–12; MR nil; SZ L (12' long); ML 9; XP 420; *MM*/241 (modified).

If these encounters aren't challenging enough, the PCs could run into a small band of Iron Ring Slavers who have secret camp in the middle of the moor. Alternatively, if the PCs are too weak, the DM may wish to have one of the survivors be an NPC adventurer who was meeting up with some companions in Seragrad. If the PCs are totally lost and starving, they should be "rescued" by Cemmendur, a patrolling ranger who will lead them back to Kelvin and feed them from his food caches (after all, it isn't very heroic to die in the middle of a moor, wandering around in circles).

Kelvin

When the PCs and survivors reach the safety of Kelvin, the PCs are hailed as heroes by the townspeople (less so if they were led to the gate by a helpful ranger). The Church of Traladara offers to shelter and feed the survivors.

That evening, as they are relaxing in front of a warm fireplace, The PCs are approached by one of the survivors, an elderly Traldar woman named Fiona who lives in Kelvin. She says that she is a sorceress whose traveling spellbooks were locked in a warded trunk that went down in the wreck of the *Crimpshrine*. She offers the PCs a reward of 500 gold royals for recovering her trunk from the depths, and offers to outfit then with potions of *water breathing* to facilitate this (a old friend of hers who is an alchemist lives in Kelvin). She is too weak to travel or lead a recovery effort herself, as she is still suffering after her familiar drowned in the wreck.

Regardless of the PCs' reply to her, Fiona spreads rumors among the other survivors that the PCs are going back to salvage items from the wreck. The next day the PCs are besieged by survivors of the wreck who beg them to retrieve personal items from the wreck and to search for signs of their loved ones. Clan Fiddleswithsticks joins in, offering to pay the PCs 250 gold royals to survey the wreck and ascertain what might have caused the accident With all these entreaties and incentives, the PCs should feel compelled to return (cautious DMs will have made sure that one

of the PCs lost a prized possession in the wreck). Fiona still offers them the potions, and, if the PCs have no means of producing magical light, she also offer to lend each of them a one-inch diameter silver ball that has been enchanted with a *continual light* spell.

Kelvin is a relatively large city (population 20,000), and the PCs should be able to find any equipment they desire at reasonable prices (including more magical potions at the DM's discretion).

Fiona: AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; M6; hp 17; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 8, D 11, C 11, I 15, W 13, Ch 12; ML 12; Spells: currently none; NWP: pottery 11, read/write Thyatian 15, read/write Traldar 15, religion (Traldar) 13, spellcraft 15.

Fiona suffered a great shock and stress when her familiar drowned in the wreck, as a result she currently has no spells memorized. She won't be able to memorize any until she can get her traveling spellbooks back or returns to her home in Mirros where her master spellbooks are.

The Journey Back

The trip back to the site of the wreck should take considerably less time, as the PCs aren't slowed by the survivors. The DM may wish to place several encounters for the PCs as they cross the moor, which is well known as a home to strange and terrible creatures. Predators who might have steered clear of the large group of survivors might be more willing to test a small group, such as the PCs. If the PCs killed the werewolf who stalked them earlier, his pack, having found his remains, may wish to take revenge on the next group of humans who come through. The moor is a strange area, and encounter possibilities are only limited to the DM's imagination.

It may be that the PCs wish to hire a sailboat to return to the wreck site, in which case they can hire Grygor the Boatman to ferry them to site and bring them back. This journey will take ten days there and seven back, costing five gold royals per day (it is a hazardous journey for small craft). There is a 15% each day of the journey of finding a corpse from the wreck. Priests who recover bodies and see them buried with an appropriate prayer should receive 150 XP per body. Good or lawful PCs (except for thieves) who loot the dead should be penalized 250 XP per body.

Whichever route the PCs take, they will be followed by Kristos, an agent of the Kelvin Thieves Guild. Unless the PCs stop and actively search for someone following them, they do not spot him (whichever route they use). If the PCs do spot him and attempt to capture him, he claims to be the nephew of one of the wreck victims on his way to recover his uncle's silver medallion, a family heirloom. If the PCs search him he claims that anything they find (like his poison) is to protect himself against the foul denizens of the moor. Generally, he tries to bluff his way out of whatever the PCs accuse him of. He has been instructed by his superiors to follow the PCs to the site and pilfer the most valuable objects they recover. He starts a day's journey behind the PCs and begins spying on their activities a day after they arrive at the wreck site. He waits and watches as the PCs go underwater once and return. If it looks like they've recovered some valuables, he waits for them to descend again before sneaking into their camp and rifling through everything. If the PCs leave a guard or two, he tries to ambush them using his light crossbow and poisoned bolts. If that fails he likely must fight them, although he'd prefer not to. His instructions are to remain until he's gathered at least 500 gold royals worth of treasure before leaving. How long he stays depends on what the PCs bring up from below and leave at camp. If captured, Kristos reveals nothing about his guild and goes peacefully to Kelvin to face justice (he knows he'll be bribed out of jail within a few months).

Kristos: AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; T6; hp 27; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab; SD Hide In Shadows; S 9, D 15, C 12, I 14, W 11, Ch 13; ML 12; PP 55%, OL 25%, F/RT 35%, MS 70%, HiS 70%, DN 15%, CW 60%, RL 0%; studded leather armor, light crossbow, *short sword +1.* NWP: alertness 11, appraising 14, boating 12, riding (land) 11, tattooing 15, tracking 9.

In addition to the above, Kristos has been outfitted with a *bag of holding,* a *flask of essence of darkness,* and five doses of contact poison that instantly causes sleep unless a successful save vs. poison is made.

The terrain around the crash site is fairly level and covered in heath, with trees being few and far between. The damp soil descends slightly as it nears the river, whereupon it gets quite muddy. The riverbanks are covered in reeds, driftwood, frogs, and debris from the wreck.

The *Crimpshrine*

The *Crimpshrine* is a three-decked riverboat powered by a juggernaut (*MM*/171) in its hold. The construct rotates endlessly around a small, banked track while attached to a massive steel harness. The juggernaut's motion provides power to the elaborate system of gears and pulleys that rotate the giant paddles mounted on the sides, propelling the boat through the water. The gears and paddles, as well as the boat's design, are all of gnomish origin, while the notion of using a magical construct to provide the power was the School of Magecraft's contribution. The design of the *Crimpshrine's* propulsion is a secret closely guarded by a select few Clan Fiddleswithsticks members and high-ranking wizards in the School of Magecraft. The blueprints are in a very stout safe in the Clan's headquarters in Highforge. As one might suspect, however, such an ambitious design is inherently dangerous.

The *Crimpshrine* runs from dawn to dusk (usually around 13–15 hours per day) at a rate of 3 mph. (plus or minus current, which is generally ½ mph on the rivers of the Kingdom). In the early evening hours, the anchor is dropped. Then the gearworks and machinery in the engine room are inspected for damage, and any necessary repairs are made.

Captain Proboscis Prominentus (a.k.a. Big Nose) is a middle-aged gnome who was one of the principal designers of the *Crimpshrine*. He rarely mingles with the passengers, preferring to stand watch in the wheelhouse to keep an eye on things. He is somewhat in awe of his creation and can sometimes hardly believe his fortune at being able to rule the rivers. In public and on duty he dresses in a crisp white cotton uniform, with the Clan Fiddleswithsticks device embroidered in gold thread. He is rarely without a corncob pipe overflowing with Five Shires tobacco clenched between his teeth. His crew consists of 10 gnomish crewmen, along with his officers, First Mate Dribblears, Purser Gastronom, and Steward Pepe.

The areas of the *Crimpshrine* are described as they appear both before and after the wreck. Before the wreck, the riverboat is in generally excellent repair, with polished wood, gleaming brass fittings and trim, and imported glass windows everywhere. Text in gray boxes describes the ship after the wreck. Note that the areas below decks are always totally unlit, as only the gnome crewmen are supposed to be down there.

There is always one merrow (hp 28) patrolling the waters around the sunken boat. Unless the PCs have some way of approaching without using light, he spots them 85% of the time and swims up to area **L** to warn the rest of the tribe. If he can warn the tribe, the merrow from areas **B, C,** and **G** swim out within 1d4 rounds to engage the PCs. The merrow in area **L** join those in area **J** and wait one turn. If no merrow have returned to report victory, the chief leads the tribe out of area **J** to search the area.

A. "Engine" room. The doors leading into this area are always locked with two superior locks; each one is –40% to pick. This massive area is crammed full of machinery that is beyond the comprehension of the PCs. (PCs with the engineering non-weapon proficiency who study the machinery for one week can attempt a proficiency check to understand the basics of how it works). Gears, levers, pulleys, and all manner of contraptions make the room impenetrable to anyone larger than a gnome (gnome, halfling, and dwarf PCs under 200 lbs. can manage to move around). There are always two crewmen on duty in here while the ship is moving.

This room is a mess of broken machinery that would take a great deal of time to clear before the PCs could move through it. However, if the PCs approach this part of the *Crimpshrine* from the exterior, they see a large hole in the side and can see the path caused by the juggernaut smashing through the gearworks. If they follow this path, they can find a log jammed through the bottom of the hold, jutting through the juggernaut's track. The juggernaut has lodged itself in the riverbank some 40 yards away from the sunken *Crimpshrine*. It is undamaged by the wreck, and it continues to spin futilely in the mud.

Notable NPC Passengers

Lucretius of Mirros is a well-known gambler whose presence dominates the gaming tables of the Crimpshrine. As far as Captain Prominentus is concerned, he is free to run the gaming hall, as long as the gnomes get their cut. He is conversant with all the known games of chance of the area. His particular favorite is the Glantrian game of spottle (see "At the Spottle Parlor," *DUNGEON Adventures* #12 for rules), which has been gaining in popularity in recent years. He can arrange for any game the PCs wish to indulge in and can round up prospective players for even the most high-stakes games. He will not allow any kind of game which involves injury to man or beast, although arm wrestling is tolerated.

Lucretius: AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; 0-level; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; I 17, W 13, Ch 15; ML 13; *ring of protection +2,* hand crossbow, stiletto in boot. NWP: appraising 17, gaming 19.

Marsallus Athenos is the alias of an earnest, well-dressed young man of Thyatian origin. He has found that the rich who typically buy passage on the Crimpshrine often make good marks for his various cons. Depending on how prosperous the PCs look, he may try to talk one or more of them into investing in a mining venture in the Cruth mountains, cropland development in the Barony of Luln, or in a timber operation in the Dymrak Forest. He carries a wide array of impressive looking (and fake) documents and contracts. He will not try immediately to wheedle any gold out of his marks, preferring to schedule meetings with them in the larger cities, where he can properly divest them of their royals.

Marsallus: AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; B3; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 9, D 14, C 8, I 16, W 11, Ch 17; ML 10; Spells: jump, wall of fog; NWP: disguise 18, forgery 18, information gathering 17. If the *Complete Bard's Handbook* is used, Marsallus is a charlatan, with all the related special abilities.

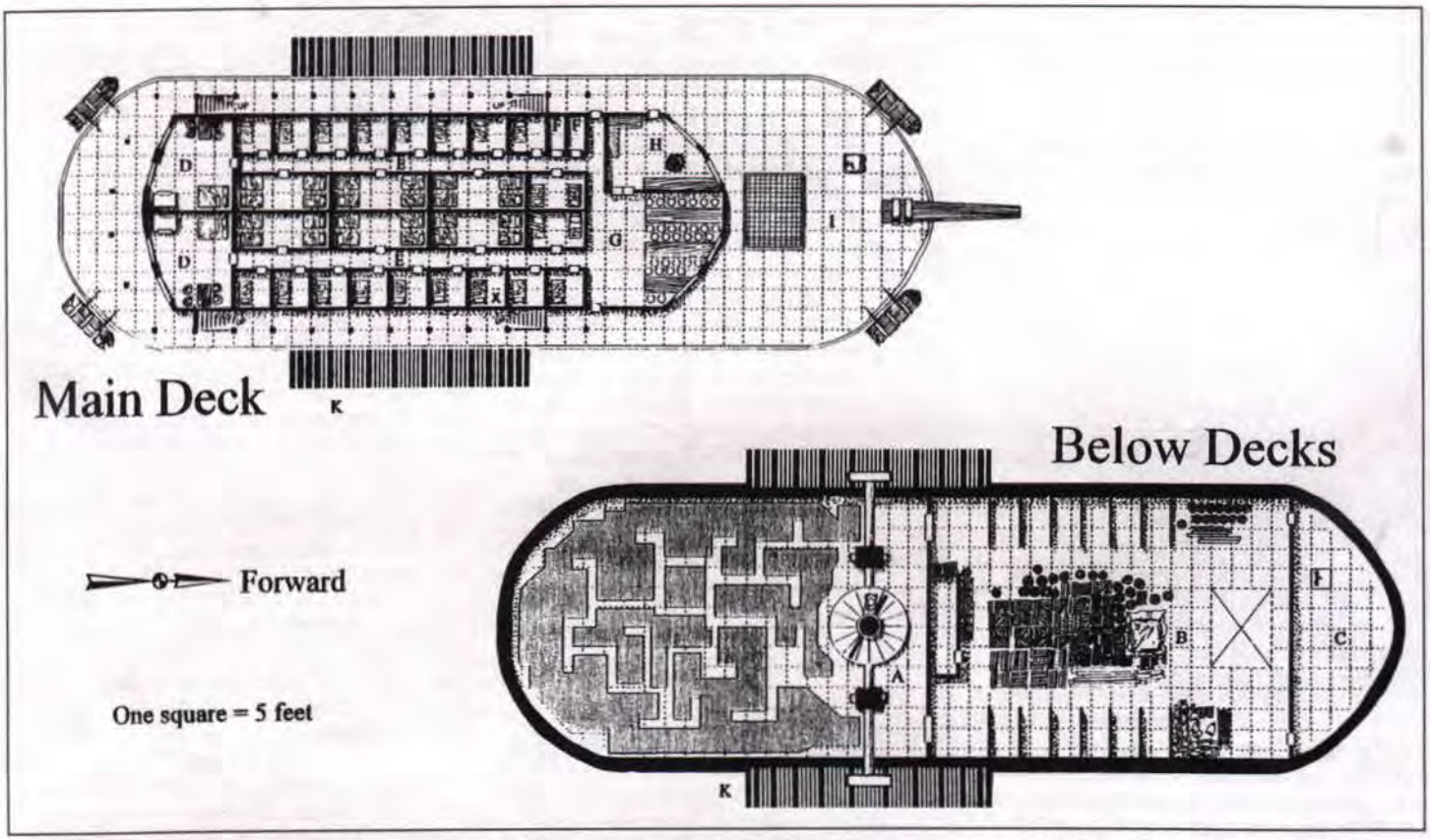
Yuri the Magnificent is an entertainer whom the captain allows to perform on the decks of the Crimpshrine in exchange for a portion of his earnings. He is a youthful-looking Traldar man who dresses in colorful, embroidered Traldar vests and hats, and baggy pants. His performances tend to feature tumbling, as well as Traldar dancing, signing, and storytelling. In inclement weather, he stays inside and dons the costume of a gypsy fortune teller.

Yuri: AL CG; AC 6; MV 12; 0-level; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 13, D 16, C 13, I 8, W 9, Ch 11; ML 12; knife. NWP: dancing 16, fortune telling 11, singing 11, storytelling 13, tumbling 16.

Oleaginous Michelangelo (a.k.a. Fat Mike) is the earnest gnomish barkeeper who keeps the mugs of the passengers well stocked. The large gnome bustles behind the long bar all day serving drinks. He usually is too busy to talk and swap rumors, except very early in the evening. His prices tend to be considerably higher than dry land taverns, but there are no other options for 30 passengers. In addition to alcohol, he is well-stocked in root beer, ginger-ale, milk, and grape juice.

Michelangelo: AL LG; AC 9; MV 6; 0-level; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 10, D 14, C 10, I 9, W 9, Ch 11; ML 11; cutlass under bar.

B. Cargo hold. This is where all commercial cargo and mounts are held during the journey. A large hatch allows access to the deck, and a gear-and-pulley elevator facilitates the loading and unloading of cargo. It is currently filled with 23 horses and 17 mules, most of which are tagged for sale in Seragrad. Other cargo includes: 20 casks of ale (each worth 20 royals, or gp), 18 crates of Volori red wine (150 gp each), two crates of Shire tobacco (500 gp each), four bolts of fine cloth (175 gp each), two crates of arms and armor (400 gp each), 10 crates of fresh fruits and vegetables (25 gp each), one case of fine leather goods (600 gp), and other mundane cargo of the DM's choosing. To the aft there is an unlocked tool and supply closet crammed full of gears, springs, and other equipment needed to make repairs. The doors to the crewmen's quarters are usually kept unlocked, while the doors to the engine room are always kept locked (see area **A**).



The merrow have ransacked the cargo hold. The ale, wine, cloth, leather, tobacco, and foodstuffs are all dissipated or destroyed. The merrow have been feasting on the trapped horses, and bits and pieces of rotting horseflesh float gruesomely through the hold along with pieces of cloth and leather.

There are three merrow (hp 27, 28, 29) in the cargo hold wrestling over a particularly succulent piece of meat, they have a 4-in-10 chance of being surprised by the PCs (unless previously alerted). The first merrow wounded below half his hit points tries to swim out to area **I** or **L** to warn the chief or priest. If that route isn't open, he tries to make his way to area **C** to summon reinforcements.

C. Crew quarters. This common room is strung willy-nilly with hammocks. There are a few small personal footlockers and tables strewn about. At any given time, four off-duty gnome crewmen are in here playing cards, eating, or sleeping.

This room has been ransacked and cleared out. The crewmen's personal treasure has been added to the tribe's hoard in area **L**. There is a lone merrow (hp 26) in here trying to fashion the hammocks into nets. He attempts to trap the first three PCs with the three nets he has finished, then attacks the remaining PCs.

D. Luxury staterooms. These two rooms look out over the aft of the *Crimpshrine*. The four-poster double beds and furnishings are to human scale and are quite comfortable compared to the regular rooms.

The windows to these rooms have been smashed by the merrow. The rooms have been ransacked and all furnishings destroyed. A small purse containing 16 Thyatian emperors (pp) lies overlooked amidst the mess. A silver-and-jade cameo worth 100 gp is also among the debris.

E. Regular rooms. The gnomish designers forgot that the large races don't enjoy being cooped up, so they designed everything facing inward and neglected to put in windows of any kind. The close quarters and the smoky oil lamps make the rooms quite stuffy, regardless of the season. Also, the rooms are too small for most non-gnomes. Each room contains a bed, a footstool, and a stout footlocker. The doors have poor quality locks (+15% to Open Locks). The purser and steward each have master keys that unlock any footlocker or door on the ship. The room marked with an X contains Fiona's waterproofed trunk, which is locked with an excellent lock (–20% to Open Locks) and trapped with a needle coated with Type D poison.

If the PCs open the chest and search through Fiona's belongings, they find a small sampling of spell components (vials of sulfur, mercury, sand, feathers, dead spiders, etc.) and the spellbook. Unfortunately, if the PCs open the spellbook, it vanishes in a puff of smoke that obscures vision in a 5′ radius but causes no damage. The book has been instantly *teleported* to Fiona's home in Mirros (by means of a *contingency* spell cast by a powerful wizard friend of Fiona). Obviously, if the chest is opened underwater, the spellbook is ruined.

Three-quarters of the rooms have been left alone, other than having the doors smashed in. The merrow found these rooms too small to search easily. Any gear the PCs left behind remains where they left it. In the untouched rooms, the footlockers remain mostly unopened. If searched, each room yields 1–10 royals and 5–50 crowns (sp). In addition, each room has a 15% of having some minor piece of jewelry (worth no more than 35 gp).

F. Heads. These tiny privies are washed out four times a day. They discharge into the river through small chutes.

G. Trencherman's Hall. This large room is named after the vessel's cook, Horatio Trencherman, who considers it his personal fief. He becomes extremely angry at any disturbances in the dining hall, charging out of the kitchen with a heavy rolling pin, demanding to know who is showing such disrespect for his cooking. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are all included in the fare.

This room is a mess of floating furniture, too large to drift out of the doors. Broken dishware and discarded tableware litter the floor. One merrow (hp 31) searches the floor for valuables. Unless the PCs are using no light and remain totally silent, he cannot be surprised and tries to swim behind the PCs to attack.

H. Galley. The galley is ruled by the cook (see area **G**) who chases anyone out who does not belong. In addition to the standard fare, the kitchen serves small, simple meals to those who prefer to eat in the Floating Anchor.

The galley has been completely looted. All foodstuffs have either been eaten or ruined by the merrow. Most of the cooking gear still lies on the floor, except the knives, which have been salvaged by the merrow.

I. Foredeck. Passengers are free to roam around on the decks as they like. The decks are kept free of loose tools and gear. The hatches to the cargo hold are kept secure during the trip. Here is a small, unlocked, brass-fitted trapdoor that leads to the crew quarters.

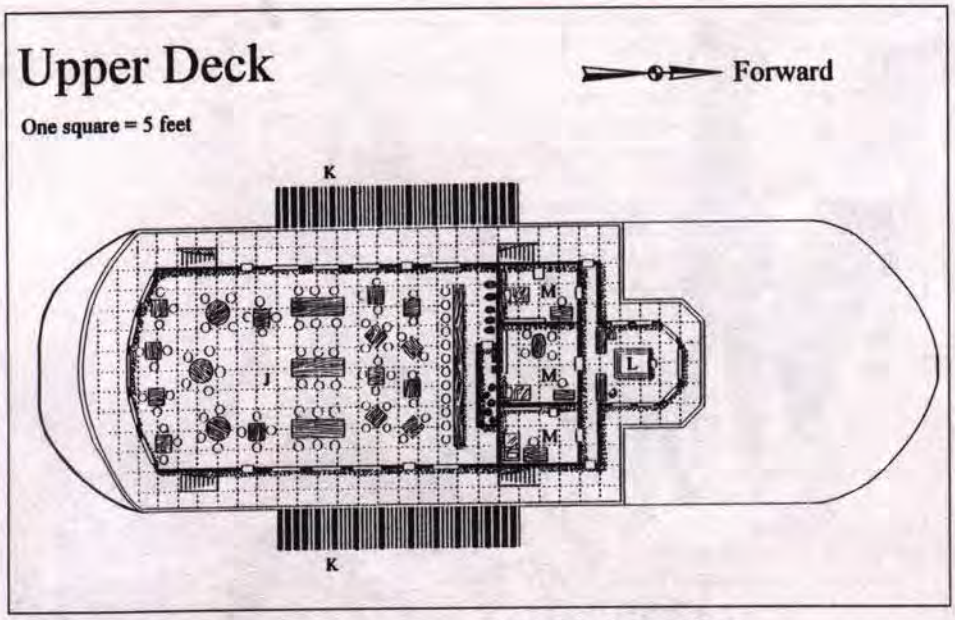
J. The Floating Anchor. This large space looks out over the aft of the *Crimpshrine*. Tables line the windows as many passengers like to sit and drink, watching the countryside drift by. In addition to drinking, a great deal of gambling takes place here. Michelangelo works the bar 16 hours a day, as two servers scuttle between the various tables, keeping tankards full. Lucretius oversees the gaming tables, which run from noon to 2:00 A.M. Marsallus is often in here trolling for marks.

This area has been cleared of furniture and most of the windows have been smashed. The merrow have stashed their sacks of treasure under a large mass of kelp they have piled behind the bar. It totals 1,653 silver pieces (mostly crona, but also some Thyatian asterius and Darokinian tendrid), 1,217 gold pieces (mostly royals, but lucins and traders as well), two elegant gold candlesticks studded with star rose quartz (worth 250 gold royals each), an elegant engraved waterproof scroll case containing old Traldar religious writings (worth 300 royals to the Church of Traladara) and any other documents the DM wishes to use as hooks for future adventures. The hook could bea treasure map (see "The Moor Tomb Map" in *DUNGEON Adventures* #13) or a journal leading to a magical sword (see "Hrothgar's Resting Place" in issue #25). The merrow chief (hp 46) is here with four attending merrow (hp 27, 32, 34, 34). They attack the PCs on sight and do not make any morale checks until the chief is slain. The merrow in area **L** arrive in two rounds once fighting breaks out.

K. Paddlewheels. These wheels, powered by the juggernaut, are what propels the *Crimpshrine* through the water. They have been covered with wood siding to prevent any curious or careless passengers from getting mangled in them.

The two large wheels have been devastated by the wreck. As the riverboat hit the bottom, one was wrenched completely off its axle and now lies off to the side while the other has bent back into the ship as it rests on a boulder.

Note: The doors leading to the wheelhouse and officer quarters are always locked.



The merrow have broken the locks on these doors.

L. Wheelhouse. This area houses the controls used by the captain to regulate the juggernaut's efforts and to steer the boat. Various maps and charts of the riverways of Karameikos line the walls.

The merrow priest has installed the tribe's crude stone idol of Panzuriel on the platform where the captain used to stand. The wheel has been torn off by the merrow, who believe it to be some type of idol. The merrow priest (hp 33) is here with an attendant merrow (hp 25), going through some minor rituals. If the PCs are stealthy (i.e. no light or sound), the merrow can be surprised; otherwise they swim through the windows, breaking them (and getting cut for 2d4 damage) and make for area **J** to gather reinforcements. The maps and charts are ruined and illegible.

M. Officer's Quarters. These rooms are the private quarters for the captain, purser, and steward. They are quite small for human standards, and the doors are only four feet high. The rooms are comfortably appointed with rugs, and furniture.

These rooms have also been ransacked for valuables, and several beds of kelp are scattered about.

Salvage Operations

The potions of *water breathing* that the PCs have been equipped with each contain three doses and allow the PC to operate underwater for at least one hour plus 1–10 rounds per dose. PCs with the swimming nonweapon proficiency may swim as per the rules, non-swimmers will have to sink and walk along the riverbed. All non-swimming movement is halved as per the slow spell due to the resistance of the water. While descending may be very easy, ascending will be difficult if the PCs are trying to carry items. If their movement rate would be reduced as per Table 48 of the *PHB,* they cannot simply float to the top. Unless ropes or some other apparatus is used, the PC will have to leave enough weight behind so that they are unencumbered. Accurate time keeping is essential due to the limited duration of the potions. Remember to give the PCs only imprecise estimates of how long they've been underwater since they won't have any method for keeping time.

The deep, dark waters make normal vision impossible at the bottom. In addition to the murky waters, the PCs will be disturbing the silt that has settled in and around the wreck, creating clouds of silt which further limit vision. The enchanted silver balls Fiona offered the PCs will illuminate a 15′ radius, any enchantments the PCs produce will only light half the area they normally do. Light sources are visible up to three times from the distance they illuminate, making surprise difficult to achieve (e.g. a PC holding an enchanted silver ball can see 15′, but his light can be seen by a merrow 45′ away). Infravision is also limited to half its normal effectiveness. There will be many odd shadows and dark forms created by the unusual interaction of light, water, silt and the wreckage, the DM should make ample use of the lack of vision to make the wreck eerie and disturbing. Obviously normal mapping will not be possible for the PCs, and it is possible that they may get confused and turned around in the darkness. Clever PCs will trail a lengthy rope in order to be able to quickly trace their way out of the wreck.

Sound carries about four times farther underwater than in open air. Any talk among the PCs carries much farther than they intend. Simply walking around the wreck causes noises that an be heard throughout the area, although they may not necessarily be pin-pointed. If the PCs talk within 50′ of the wreck, the merrow are alerted and stop whatever they are doing to listen and prepare for intruders. Thus the descriptions of the various areas on the wreck given in the sidebar may be different depending on the PCs stealth.

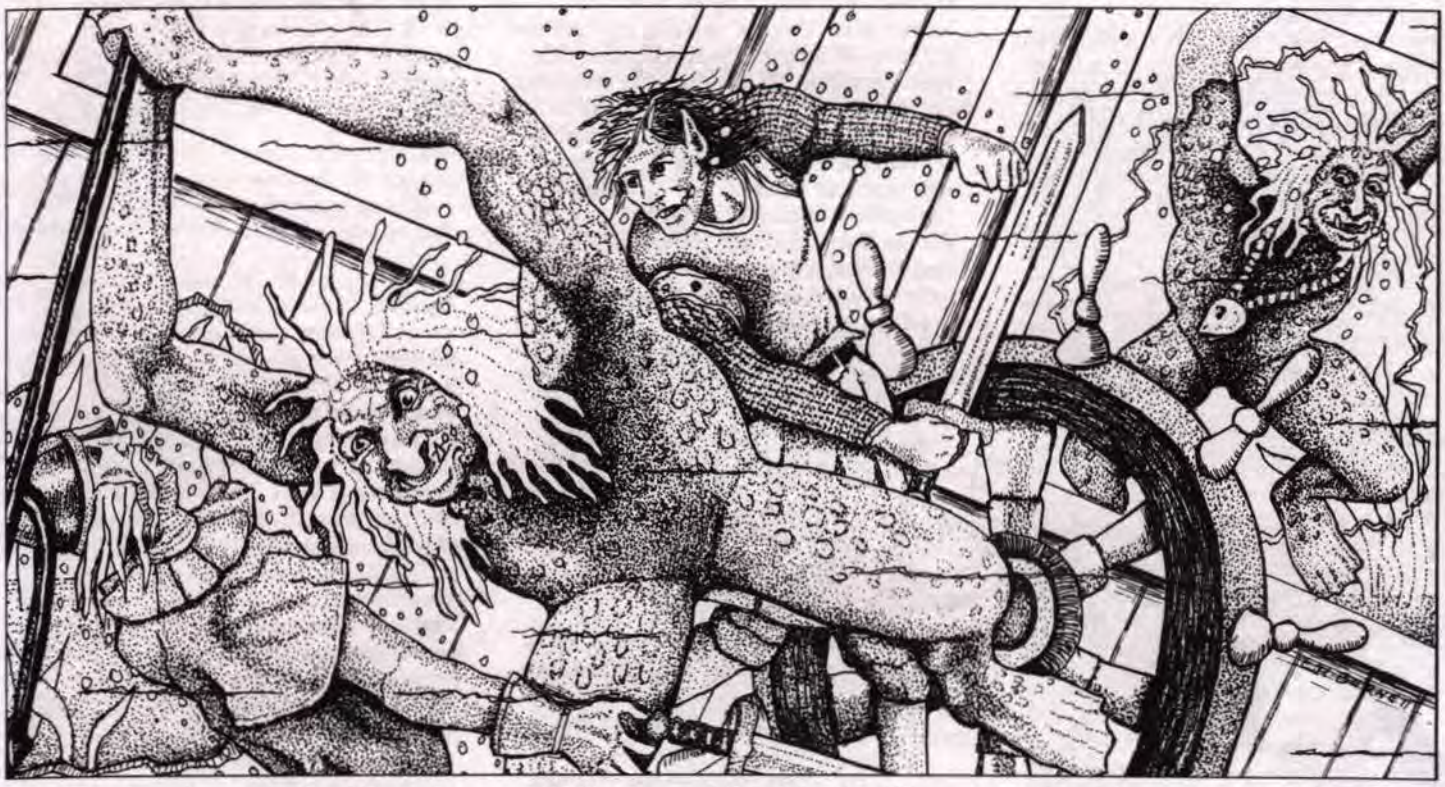
All PCs suffer a +4 penalty to initiative and a –4 attack penalty when engaged in underwater melee. Only piercing weapons are effective in underwater combat, weapons that inflict slashing or bludgeoning are useless in underwater combat. If the PCs don't already know this, the DM should have an NPC mention it in passing before they leave Kelvin. The lack of visibility makes the PCs particularly vulnerable to the merrows' charge attack.

Merrow (13): INT 9; AL CE; AC 4; MV 6, Swim 12; HD 4+4, THAC0 16*; #AT 3; Dmg 0–5/0–5/0–7*; SA surprise, swimming charge; SD camouflage; MR nil; SZ L; ML 11; XP 420; *MM*/272.

Grak-Chu, Merrow Priest of Panzuriel: As normal merrow, but also has the following spells on hand: *cause fear, cause serious wounds, darkness; hold person, spiritual spear* (as per *spiritual hammer,* only substitute spear). ML 13; XP 650; *MM*/272.

Truk-Pa, Merrow Chief: As normal merrow, only HD 6+6; ML 13; XP 975; *MM*/272.

This tribe of merrow has been attracted by the corpses floating down



river. They have been busy feasting and searching the wreck for shiny treasure for their grumpy chief who has declared the *Crimpshrine* their new home. He is feeling somewhat surly, as the tribal priest has claimed the most interesting area (**L**) to house the shrine to Panzuriel (see page 90 of *Monster Mythology*). Naturally the merrow will not take kindly to any interlopers who try and invade their newfound home and will fight to the death until the chief and priest are killed. Once the chief and priest are killed, the merrow must make morale checks or they flee. The merrow have overeaten in the last several days and are rather lethargic; thus, they all suffer a –1 to their THAC0 and damage (this is reflected in the statistics above). In several days, three of the warriors will swim down river 10 miles to gather up all the females and children and bring them to their new lair.

Concluding the Adventure

Obviously if the PCs are successful in their salvage, they will have made a number of friends. In addition to the survivors, the gnomes of Clan Fiddleswithsticks and the School of Magecraft will be very pleased with the PCs for their help in surveying the wreck. They may wish to hire the PCs in the future to clean up after other disasters of their making.

If they've recovered her chest, Fiona may be amenable to teaching a PC wizard a spell or two. However, if they've opened her chest and her spellbook has teleported away, she refuses to pay them and treats them with great suspicion.

Depending on what happened with Kristos, the PCs might be on the blacklist of the Kelvin Thieves Guild. Alternatively, if Kristos is successful, the PCs may wish to investigate the matter and take on the thieves guild, which would be the start of a long campaign of intrigue.

If the PCs had to be rescued by the ranger Cemmendur on their way to Kelvin, he may call upon them in the future to aid him in some task.

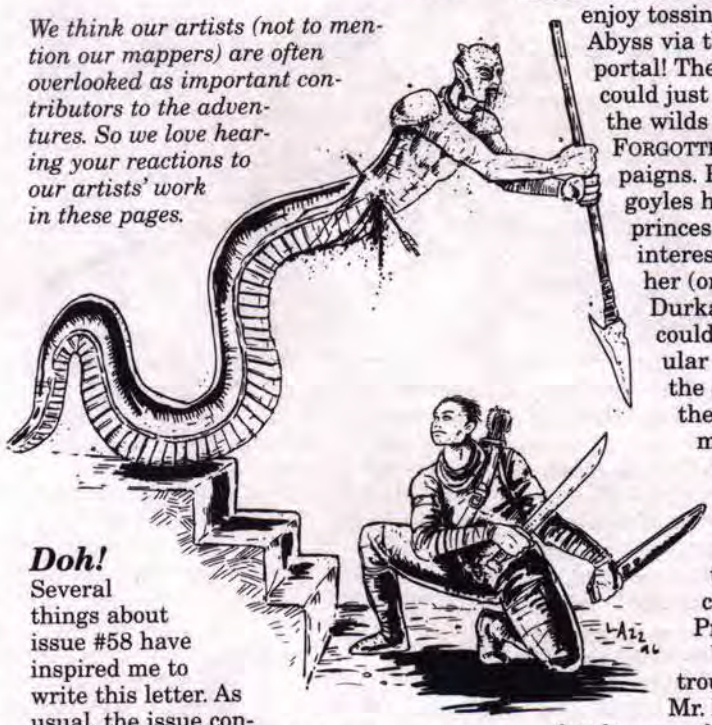
Despite the wreck, the gnomes will not be deterred. Within a year they launch a second riverboat, *The Lookout* (featuring a reinforced hull), for which the PCs receive lifetime free passes if they are still in the area and proved helpful. If the PCs are initially unsuccessful, the DM may wish to have the Clan Fiddleswithsticks gnomes summon Clanbrother Kilinin with his diving bell (see "Whitelake Mine" in *DUNGEON Adventures* #18) to aid in another salvage attempt. If the PCs discovered a treasure map or a mysterious journal (see page 62) or received the cryptic message (as suggested on page 64), a future adventure is already in the works! Ω

Tattoo You

DUNGEON Adventures #58 arrived in my mailbox. The entire issue looks fantastic! I was especially delighted to see that John Dollar had done the artwork for "The Baron's Eyrie"; I had hoped-beyond-hope that he would be assigned "Eyrie" after I saw his spot for "Cloaked in Fear" in issue #57. I want to have his drawing of the werebats on page 51 tattooed to my chest! Please pass on my appreciation to Mr. Dollar, as well as to the rest of your staff, for a fine, fine, job.

Jason Kuhl
New Haven, CT

We think our artists (not to mention our mappers) are often overlooked as important contributors to the adventures. So we love hearing your reactions to our artists' work in these pages.



Doh!

Several things about issue #58 have inspired me to write this letter. As usual, the issue contains a fine collection of adventures and some thought-provoking letters. I'll return to the letters in a moment.

I noticed that you forgot to include one of the six modules in your table of contents. As it happens, the adventure was mine. Did you simply run out of space? If so, I'd consider changing the format of your table of contents! Also, for the first time in DUNGEON Adventures's history, there's no editorial!

The rest of this letter is my response to a comment made by McRey B. Moyer in issue #58. The comment concerns "Umbra" in issue #55. As the writer of DUNGEON Adventures' first PLANESCAPE™ adventure, I felt it was important to promote what is, in my opinion, one of the finest AD&D lines ever conceived. Having said that, I agree with Mr. Moyer that "Umbra" pushed the limits in terms of length. I just assumed that most qualified DMs—even the ones who don't like extra-planar adventures—would find something worth salvaging in "Umbra." Nevertheless, Mr. Moyer was quick to write off the adventure as "unusable." It should be noted that the Zactar Cathedral, the Screaming Tower, and Durkayle's stronghold are wonderfully detailed encounter locations that need not be placed in Sigil.

The Zactar Cathedral could easily be transformed into the lair of a reclusive death cult. The cultists might even enjoy tossing victims into the Abyss via the cathedral's magical portal! The Screaming Tower could just as easily be found in the wilds of the GREYHAWK® or FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaigns. Perhaps Zaraga's gargoyles have kidnapped a princess (or something more interesting) and are holding her (or it) for ransom. Durkayle's Harmonium could be turned into a regular city militia. Perhaps the stronghold is under the influence of a polymorphed extra-planar fiend like Greptaug the amnizu. Any DM with imagination can find a reason to pit the PCs against such a creature, even on the Prime Material plane.

What I find most troubling about Mr. Moyer's comments is that he never bothered to read the adventure. If you read it and you still can't use it, fine. Unfortunately, you can't judge the usefulness of a module simply by its length (or by a single word, such as the PLANESCAPE or RAVENLOFT® settings). I just finished running 'Grave Circumstances," a DARK SUN® adventure, in my regular AD&D campaign. Mr. Moyer doesn't mention DARK SUN in his letter, but he does apply his rather narrow vision to BIRTHRIGHT™ adventures. I'm proud to say that I have a BIRTHRIGHT adventure featured in issue #59. I'd like to think it does more than "take up space." Yes, it's long. It even includes suggestions on how to adapt the adventure to standard AD&D campaigns. I hope Mr. Moyer takes the time to read these suggestions. I'm quite certain that he and many of *DUNGEON Adventures'* loyal subscribers will find the adventure (as a whole or in part) both useful and enjoyable.

Sincerely,
Chris Perkins
Ontario, Canada

Our apologies to Chris on our stupid mistake. Unfortunately, our errors weren't limited to the table of contents. As Johnathan Richards pointed out, two of the objects in "Challenge of Champions" were mysteriously enlarged before they appeared in print. The 2' diameter rock from Scenario #2 should have been a mere 2" diameter, and the board behind the door in Scenario #4 grew from 2" × 2" × 10' to a much thicker 2' × 2' × 10'. While we're at it, we must also apologize to Tony Ross and Matthew Vienneau, whose letters we mixed together in issue #55 (the last paragraph in Matthew's letter, commenting on cover art, is actually Tony's). We sort of miss the old typesetting machine, since we can't blame our mistakes on it anymore.

Johnathan also writes: "I was amused to see that Ken Meyer, Jr., did the cover painting for this issue. I'd like to point out that this isn't the Ken Meyer that I mentioned in my dedication—just one of those weird coincidences."

Turning back to issue #57, John Hartshorne's "To Cure a Kingdom" appears to be the readers' favorite. Those who wrote especially liked the dangerous, scheming villain. As with issue #56, however, every scenario was somebody's favorite, and the tally was very close. Readers of DUNGEON Adventures *are nothing if not diverse.*

Both SideTrek adventures, "Carcass Fracas" and "Cloaked in Fear," drew praise for clever situations. "The Rose of Jumlat" especially delighted fans of the AL-QADIM® setting, who hoped for more adventures in the Land of Fate. (We have one in the works.) "The Murder of Maury Miller" earned compliments all around, especially from those who noted that this was Cameron's first appearance in these pages. For the record, both Cameron and John Hartshorne ("To Cure a Kingdom") were first-time authors for DUNGEON Adventures. *We always welcome new authors, and we hope to see more work from Cameron and John in future.* Ω

Mhorien soldiers (20): INT average; AC 4; AL CG; MV 12; F1; hp 10 each; THAC0 20 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength); ML 14; XP 35; chain mail, shield, long sword, heavy crossbow, 2d6 bolts, dagger.

Assuming the PCs have not betrayed him, Eldred leads them back to their domain. If battle erupts between the PCs and the Mhorien soldiers, Eldred tries to diffuse the situation by accepting responsibility (and punishment) for the PCs' actions. This brave act does little to affect the turn of events, however. Killing the daughter of the Mhor's advisor is punishable by death. Even if Taerlyn's true killer eludes capture, word of the murder spreads across Anuire. Taerlyn's betrothed (a young nobleman named Gaelin) may even hire assassins to avenge her death, perhaps precipitating a full-blown war.

Concluding the Adventure

If Taerlyn was killed or critically injured by the PCs, Regien presses the Mhor to take action. If Taerlyn's killers refuse to return to Mhoried to face criminal indictment, the Mhor may break off all diplomatic ties to the PC regent's domain. He may even call up a few favors from other powerful regents, turning them against the PCs until "justice" is rightfully served. Taerlyn pursues private vengeance if her devoted Ruornad was slain by the party, perhaps using her father's resources to strike back at the PCs. A PC regent accused of murder may lose respect in his own domain, the effects of which are left up to the DM.

Although their search for a tighmaevril weapon proves futile, PCs who survive the perils of Highwall will doubtless acquire a fair amount of treasure (and possibly a few magical items). Assuming the PCs are not driven out of Mhoried by Regien, the PCs may request an escort to the border of Mhoried. For a small donation to the Mhor's treasury (½ GB or 1,000 gp), Mhorien soldiers gladly oblige. Upon returning home, the PC regent may add the remaining haul to his own treasury, converting it all into gold bars.

If Eldred survives the adventure, he may prove beneficial in future dealings with Mhoried (assuming the PCs and the Mhor remain on good terms). Eldred has many ties to Mhoried. If the PC regent maintains steady diplomatic relations, a future alliance may be possible. Diplomatic efforts may be thwarted by sinister forces that do not wish to see Mhoried become stronger than it already is. (The Barony of Ghoere feels particularly threatened by the Mhor's growing strength and popularity.)

As he becomes more respected and influential, Eldred could become a detriment to the PC regent. He may someday rise to the status of a "great captain" (as described on page 43 of the BIRTHRIGHT rulebook). The inhabitants of the PC's domain might be swayed into placing their trust in Eldred rather than the regent, thus neutralizing one of the regent's holdings or provinces (which becomes loyal to Eldred instead). Of course, any attempt to contest or remove Eldred may trigger serious political repercussions.

And finally, the Gorgon doesn't like regents who kill his henchmen. If the PCs defeat Skorn and Murkblade, the Gorgon certainly takes notice. He might send spies or assassins into the PC regent's domain. The awnshegh certainly blocks any attempt to form an alliance with Mhoried, which he plans to attack in the near future. Ω

Thanks to this Issue's Playtesters

James Brett
Paul Lynds
Christopher Perkins

If you'd like to playtest for DUNGEON® Adventures, send us a letter and a large, self-addressed, stamped envelope.

The letter should describe your gaming group and list the settings that you most enjoy. (We especially need more playtesters who are familiar with the PLANESCAPE™ and BIRTHRIGHT™ settings.) We'll do our best to send you the sort of adventure you like best.

The envelope should be big enough to contain an issue of the magazine, and you must include at least a dollar's postage ($2 may be safer). In return, you'll receive nothing but our gratitude and your name in these pages—but you'll get to play the adventures before they're published.

Write to:

Playtesters
c/o DUNGEON Adventures
201 Sheridan Springs Road
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

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ye shall commit to memory the rules

2 months

ye shall play to gain new character levels

1 month

ye shall stock up on Jolt and Mountain Dew

20 days

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10 days

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2 days

ye shall count down the hours 'til GEN CON

1 day

ye shall get to the airport early and start gaming in the waiting area

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ISBN 0-7869-0568-9
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